

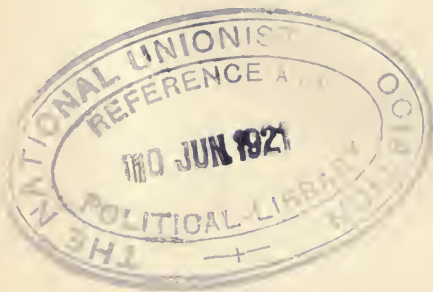


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S P E E C H E S
OF
MR. PETER RYLANDS, M.P.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS.

No. I.

ON MR. OTWAY'S MOTION FOR A SELECT COMMITTEE TO INQUIRE
INTO THE CONSTITUTION OF THE DIPLOMATIC AND CONSULAR
SERVICES.

Delivered in the House of Commons, Feb. 14, 1870.

I wish to express my gratification at the course taken by the Government in proposing a Select Committee in accordance with the recommendation I made last session. I am not quite satisfied with the wording of the resolution, but I presume there is no intention of limiting the inquiries of the Committee, but that the Committee will inquire into the management of the Foreign Office as well as into the constitution of the Services; and that, although no reference is made to the cost of the Diplomatic and Consular Services, the attention of the Committee will be directed to the means of securing a reduction of expenditure. When I ventured to address the House last year upon this question, I referred to the recommendation of the Official Salaries Committee of 1850, and pointed out that those recommendations, if carried out, would have been the means of great economy, but that they had been entirely disregarded by the Foreign Office, and, in consequence, the expenditure of that Department had been continually increasing. I moved for Returns showing the total increased charges for embassies abroad since 1851, which were laid on the table last week, and which entirely confirm the statements I made. The Foreign Office have drawn out the Returns in [such a way as to give the impression that the increased expenditure was balanced by savings in other directions; but that is not

a fair statement of the case. The increase acknowledged by the Foreign Office as having taken place since 1851 is as follows:—Upon embassies, £14,000; first-class missions, £3,550; and upon second-class missions, £3,575; making a total of £21,525. In each of these cases the increase has arisen in consequence of the disregard shown to the resolutions of the Committee of 1850. That Committee wished to reduce the embassies to France and Turkey to the rank of missions, but instead of that the Foreign Office have raised the missions to Russia, Austria, and Prussia to the rank of embassies, at an increased annual charge of £10,250. Another recommendation of the Committee was that no salary should exceed £5,000; but we are now paying our Ambassador to France £10,000; Turkey, £8,000; Russia, £7,800; Austria, £8,000; and Prussia, £7,000. These items alone show an excess beyond the amount recommended by the Committee of £15,800 per annum. The Foreign Office, in the Return now presented, justify this expenditure by referring to the recommendation of the Diplomatic Service Committee of 1861, to the effect that the

“Attention of the Secretary of State be directed to the salaries and allowances of the larger missions, with a view of considering whether they are adequate to meet the greatly-increased expenditure of living at the principal European capitals.”

But I am not disposed to consider the recommendations of the Committee of 1861 as of much value. This Committee differed entirely in its constitution from the Committee of 1850, and was certainly not of a character likely to satisfy the public. It consisted of 15 members, 10 or 11 of whom were either officials or ex-officials, and two or three others were officials expectant. They called before them a number of witnesses connected with the Diplomatic and Consular Services, and questions were put to them, which practically amounted to asking them if they would like an increase of salary. Of course, it is not to be wondered at that a Committee so constituted, and dealing with such evidence, should report in favour of increased expenditure. But the Returns presented by the Foreign Office do not by any means include the whole of the increased expenditure since 1851. They acknowledge an increase of £21,525, but, in addition to that, there is the charge for Third Secretaries, amounting to £2,298, and for clerks attached to South American missions, £1,056. Nor is that all. There are travelling expenses of the Second and Third Secretaries, who are moved from one post to another every two years, in accordance with the regulations adopted since the Committee of 1861. These charges must be considerable, and it does appear to me a most unreasonable arrangement to require these secretaries to leave their posts just as soon as they are likely to become familiar with the business of the mission to which they are attached, and when they may possibly have become of some use. There is also an increased charge for outfits, which rises with every advance of salary, being calculated at one-third. Consequently in the case of the five great embassies alone, the additional charge for outfits amounts to £5,000. Diplomatic pensions have also been advanced. It will be seen from the Returns that several second-class missions have been raised to the first-class, apparently without increased

charge to the public. But that change under the Pensions Act of last session would have the effect of increasing the pensions to the holders of those missions from £900 to £1,300 a year. The calculation of these several items would undoubtedly bring up the actual increased charge for the Diplomatic Service to above £30,000 per annum, in place of £21,525 as shown by the Return. But beyond all this, there are the extraordinary expenses of missions abroad, which amounted to £16,000 in 1850, and now stand at £40,000, showing an increase of £24,000 a year. When, in the course of my speech last session, I said the accounts of these missions were so kept that they gave opportunities for fraudulent expenditure, my hon. friend the Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs was very indignant and asserted that

“Every shilling spent in the Diplomatic Service—whether extravagantly or economically—was most accurately accounted for, and audited with the greatest strictness by public officers.”

I do not, of course, dispute the assertion of my hon. friend that the accounts are strictly audited. But the question is, how far can they be checked, and how far is the audit an efficient one? and upon that point I will call the attention of my hon. friend to the evidence of Mr. Conyngham, the late Chief Clerk of the Foreign Office, before the Committee of Public Accounts in 1865. That evidence, which was given conjointly with Mr. Hammond, shows how little that check amounts to, for when asked, “In the end it comes to your passing the accounts?” Mr. Conyngham answered, “We get rid of the difficulty somehow.” Let us now consider what the reductions, as shown in the Return, consist of. They are as follows:—Missions in Italy, £6,300; Germany, £10,600; Mexico, £4,800; Monte Video, £365; and Bolivia, £365; or a total of £22,430. It will be evident to the House that the great proportion of the reduced charges arise in no way from the economy of the Foreign Office, but were necessitated by the course of events over which the Foreign Office had no control. The Italian missions were suppressed owing to the political changes in that kingdom. The same was the case in Germany; and the interruption of diplomatic relationships with Mexico have been occasioned, as is well known, by the events which have occurred in that country. These missions account for nearly £22,000 out of the alleged savings; and, in fact, the only reduction which the Government can claim credit for is that of Monte Video, which has taken place since the motion which I submitted to the House last session. I am very glad to see the suppression of that mission as the first-fruits of the economy of the Foreign Office, and I hope it is only the prelude of a similar suppression of the smaller missions in South America, which are maintained at a cost of £11,400 a year. I regret to see that, notwithstanding the events in Germany, the Foreign Office still maintain Secretaries of Legation at some of the smaller Courts, which is a perfectly useless expense. In thus referring to the large increase in diplomatic expenditure since 1851, I do not wish to complain of the present Government. My complaint is against the management of the Foreign Office for the last twenty years. The present Government have been so much occupied since their accession to office that they could scarcely have been expected to deal with these

questions sooner. I give them credit for a strong desire to promote economy in the public services, and I trust that in the appointment of this Committee the Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs will see that it is so constituted as to secure the public confidence; and I have a full expectation that the result of its labours will lead to a considerable reduction in the expenditure, and at the same time maintain the efficiency of the services.

No. II.

SPEECH ON THE RIGHT OF PARLIAMENTARY CONTROL OVER THE
TREATY-MAKING POWER.

Delivered in the House of Commons, Feb. 14, 1873.

The resolution which I beg to submit for the consideration of the House is as follows:—"That in the opinion of this House the Commercial Treaty recently negotiated with France, and all future treaties between this country and foreign powers, ought to be laid upon the table of both Houses of Parliament before being ratified, in order that an opportunity may be afforded to both Houses of expressing their opinion upon the provisions of such Treaties." I have purposely framed this motion in such general language that, in agreeing to it, the House will not be committed to any expression of opinion further than that in future Parliament shall have an effectual control over all treaties that the Government of this country may enter into with foreign powers. Such a result might be secured by one of three courses, viz., either by requiring an address from Parliament in favour of a treaty before ratification; or by making treaties subject to the disapproval of Parliament; or by submitting all treaties prior to ratification to the consideration of a joint committee of members of both Houses. I express no opinion upon any of these courses, but I am anxious simply to obtain an acknowledgement of the principle of Parliamentary control, leaving the Government to suggest the best means of carrying the principle into effect. In making this proposal I do not suppose that at the present day I shall be met with the objection that I am seeking to deprive the Crown of one of its prerogatives. Indeed, two years ago there was great opposition on the part of honourable gentlemen opposite to the exercise of the royal prerogative in the abolition of purchase in the army. I did not concur in those views, but still it may be said that on both sides of the House the exertion of the royal prerogative was not regarded with favour. In fact, one prerogative of the Crown after another has disappeared, and it is singular that this in reference to treaties—one of the most dangerous—has lasted so long. No doubt the making of treaties was in former ages a substantial prerogative exercised by the king in his own right and frequently for his own personal interests. But that is now all changed. It is well understood that the Sovereign actually takes no part in making treaties on behalf of this country with foreign powers, but that the whole responsibility in the matter lies upon the Cabinet. And it is an extra-

ordinary fact that whilst we refuse to allow the fifteen right honourable gentlemen sitting round the cabinet table to pass a Turnpike Bill, or to lay a tax of a fraction of a penny in the pound, without the consent of Parliament, we invest them with absolute authority to pledge this country to undertakings that may lead in after times to war, and involve the people in enormous expenditure and in loss and disaster. Blackstone says that the right of the executive to make treaties is because it is "the sovereign power;" but the sovereign power now rests with the three estates of the realm, and it is with them, and not with the Crown alone, that the authority for making treaties should now reside. This question naturally arose during the two past sessions in connection with the discussion of the Treaty of Washington, and opinions were expressed by eminent members of both Houses in favour of the policy which I am now advocating. In this House my right hon. friend the member for Liskard (Mr. Horsman), and my hon. friend the member for Waterford (Mr. Osborne), both urged the right of Parliament to control the treaty-making power; and similar opinions were expressed in the other House on June 12th, 1871, by a distinguished nobleman whose judgment will carry great weight with hon. gentlemen on both sides. In the speech to which I refer, Lord Derby put the matter very clearly, and I am happy to fortify myself by quoting the following passage from his speech. He said—"No doubt there is a great deal to be said both on theoretical and on practical grounds for the principle that the Parliament and the country ought not to be bound by the acts of the executive, whoever at the time may compose it, in making international treaties without having an opportunity of considering the merits of those treaties." In one of the discussions in this House to which I have alluded, the Prime Minister admitted that a great deal was to be said in favour of limiting the power of the Crown to conclude and ratify treaties without the consent of Parliament, but he objected to it on the ground that it would be a very inconvenient system, and said that it would introduce open instead of secret diplomacy, giving as an instance of the serious effects of the "open system" the course taken by the Duc de Grammont in the French Chamber in making public declarations which destroyed the chance of the maintenance of peace with Prussia. But I respectfully submit that the right hon. gentleman in urging these arguments entirely missed the point. The open system of diplomacy was expressly adopted by the Duc de Grammont for the purpose of exasperating the French people and of forcing on the war; but no one recommends a policy of that kind. No one for a moment proposes that pending negotiations shall be made public, or that they should not go on, as they have hitherto done, in a confidential manner. But what I contend for is, that after her Majesty's Government have carefully discussed, and with such secrecy as they may think necessary, in conjunction with the other parties concerned, the conditions of a proposed treaty, the treaty itself shall be submitted to Parliament. The Prime Minister said that if this course were adopted the negotiation of treaties would be rendered more difficult. But that is not a very great objection. We have had too many treaties. It would have been a very great advantage, instead of a disadvantage, if a large number of objectionable treaties between this

country and foreign powers had never been entered into. If a proposed treaty was manifestly for the public interest, there would be no difficulty in getting the assent of Parliament; and clearly, if a majority of Parliament were opposed to any treaty, it is only right that it should be dropped. The Senate of the United States have the power which I am asking for this House, and the National Assembly of France at the present moment possess the power, which they are about to exercise, of reviewing the Commercial Treaty just entered into with this country before it can receive the ratification of the President of the Republic. But in order to give the House the power which the Senate of the United States and the National Assembly of France possess, it is necessary that in the treaty itself there should be an article providing that the ratification shall be dependent upon the sanction of the Houses of Parliament being secured by her Majesty's Government. The other evening, when I urged upon the Government the advantage of giving the House an opportunity of considering the French Treaty, the Prime Minister very courteously assured me that it would be immediately laid on the table; and, inasmuch as it would have to be considered by the National Assembly of France before it was ratified, there would be an opportunity afforded to members of the House to consider the matter. But while that is undoubtedly true, the fact of the treaty being now in possession of the House is merely an accidental circumstance, which practically gives Parliament no control. The position in which we are placed is this—that while under the 24th Article of the treaty the assent of the National Assembly is to be obtained before the President of the Republic undertakes to ratify the treaty, our plenipotentiaries, as I understand, have come under the absolute obligation of ratifying the treaty without reference to the action of Parliament. Precisely the same kind of accidental circumstance occurred in reference to the Washington Treaty in 1871, which was laid upon the table of both Houses before it was ratified. Lord Russell took the opportunity on the 12th of June, 1871, in the House of Lords, of moving an address to the Crown, praying her Majesty not to ratify the Treaty—and how was that motion met? The House of Lords felt itself barred by the terms under which our plenipotentiaries were appointed, from interfering in the matter. A noble and learned lord of very high authority, Lord Cairns, put the case very strongly. He contrasted the credentials of the Commissioners of the United States, which consisted merely of an authority to discuss and sign a Treaty subject to the ratification of the Senate, with the credentials of the Commissioners of her Majesty conferring plenipotentiary powers. Those credentials were in the usual terms, but the noble and learned lord thought them so important that he quoted them at length, and called attention to the fact that the Queen “engaged and promised upon the Royal word” that the acts of the Commissioners should be “agreed to, acknowledged, and accepted” by the Crown in the “fullest manner,” and were to be taken with “equal force and efficacy” as if done by the Queen herself. Lord Cairns added—“I refer to these words for this purpose. I am as jealous as any of your lordships can be to preserve intact and in full the proper power of Parliament; but I maintain that when a Treaty has been

signed, as this Treaty has been, by plenipotentiaries possessing the powers I have read, the mere accidental circumstance that the ratifications have not been actually exchanged makes no difference to the substance, though it may to the form; so that, to all intents and purposes, this Treaty is at this moment, in honour and honesty, as binding upon this country, according to the constitution of the country, as if the ratifications had been actually exchanged." The House of Lords were evidently impressed with this view of the case, and there was no division on Lord Russell's resolution. In this House the Washington Treaty was not formally considered until subsequent to its ratification, and the right hon. gentleman opposite (Sir Charles Adderley) who raised the discussion admitted there was no power of interference. And yet, notwithstanding all this, the question is now raised as to whether Parliament is not equally with the Ministry responsible for the Treaty of Washington. The Chancellor of the Exchequer said the other night that the House is responsible for the "Three Rules," about which there had been so much discussion, because "the Washington Treaty was laid before Parliament, and therefore Parliament was cognizant of the three rules." My right hon. friend, the member for Kilmarnock (Mr. Bouverie), very properly, in my opinion, protested against this doctrine, and denied that the House of Commons were parties to the treaty. He said, "it was the Crown that made the treaty, and the ministers of the Crown are responsible to Parliament." But I observe that the leading journal is pressing this charge of responsibility against us. Two or three days since the *Times* argued that "Parliament, having the power by an address to abrogate the treaty, acquiesced in it, and must therefore share the responsibility." It may be true that, technically, we had the power, but how was it possible to exercise it under the circumstances? The position of things was such that we could only have stopped the treaty by an overthrow of the Government, with a great political convulsion, and with the occasion of fresh sources of quarrel with our brethren across the Atlantic. I have a very strong opinion that if the right of considering the terms of the treaty had been reserved to Parliament, that right would have been effectually exercised, and that the blots in the treaty would have been detected and cured. In fact, the main blot, even in the partial discussion which took place, was indicated. But the discovery came too late to be cured, and we were left for months in a state of great public anxiety lest the proposed arbitration should fail. We learned with much surprise that one of the Commissioners, Professor Bernard, justified the dangerous ambiguity of the treaty by giving reasons which sometimes make it necessary for diplomatists to avail themselves of "less accurate" language than they would otherwise employ. Of course the Foreign Office sanctioned this "less accurate" language. Yet the Foreign Office always prides itself upon its powers of accuracy of expression—they say the training of the service enables them to draw up diplomatic documents in language which shall be free from mistake, but I must say that my experience has shown that the Foreign Office has by no means succeeded in this object. The Washington Treaty was certainly a case in point. It appeared that certain expressions that might otherwise have been insisted upon had been yielded in order to avoid offending the

susceptibilities of the Senate of the United States ; but if our Commissioners at Washington had been able to say that the language they adopted must be such as was likely to be also accepted by the House of Commons, their position would have been strengthened, and the use of ambiguous language might have been avoided. I think altogether, in this view, the relative position held by our Commissioners was an unfair one, and I hope the Government, by accepting my proposal, will prevent similar disadvantages in future in the negotiation of treaties by British Commissioners. I think the responsibility of Parliament in the matter of treaties should be a real responsibility, and whilst I may not carry hon. members with me to the full extent of all treaties, I think they will be disposed to agree with me that in the case of commercial treaties there should be in every case a special article rendering their ratification conditional upon the sanction of the House being obtained. We have a right specially to urge this in respect to the French Treaty on the ground of former precedents. Mr. Pitt, in 1787, laid the Commercial Treaty with France on the table of the House, and an address to the Crown was moved upon it. In 1860 Lord Palmerston informed the House that in reference to the French Treaty he proposed to follow the course adopted by Mr. Pitt; and he stated that by a distinct article it was subject to the approval of Parliament. In the present treaty such a power was reserved to the French Assembly, though not to the House of Commons ; but without this power it was impossible that the House of Commons could deal with the subject. It surely seems only reasonable that an opportunity should be afforded of discussing this question, not as a matter of party politics, or of confidence in the Government, but as solely affecting the commerce of the country, and I hope it is not too late, even now, to introduce a Supplemental Article in the treaty providing for the prior approval of the House of Commons before ratification. We have yet to discuss the question whether it is desirable to have any treaty at all, and I have hitherto heard no arguments which justify the course taken by the Foreign Office. My belief is that the treaty is altogether an impolitic one. Had Lord Melbourne been alive he might with advantage have suggested to the Foreign Office—"Why can't you let it alone?" The great thing is to impress upon the Foreign Office the necessity of letting things alone, and of intermeddling as little as possible. Lord Granville, at the Mansion House, did make a defence of the proposed treaty, and the *Times*, which had apparently varied in its judgment upon this question, though I do not complain that it has reflected the changes in public feeling, thus summed up its comments upon Lord Granville's speech :—"The weak point in his argument was that he did not show why it was desirable to have a treaty at all." I quite agree that this was the weak point in his argument. We should have left the French people to learn by experience the effect of the denunciation of the treaty of 1860, and I believe that in a short period the denunciation of the treaty would have been generally acknowledged to be very injurious to the commercial interests of France, and that a lesson of political economy would have been taught to the nation, which would have been greatly in favour of free commercial intercourse. We ought not to have stepped forward to assist the President in what was a

reactionary policy. By assisting him in this way we have placed ourselves in a false position. I have been ashamed to see deputations from English Chambers of Commerce haggling for terms under the treaty. Such proceedings much shake the opinion of the world as to the confidence we feel in our own principles, and the policy of the Government has struck a blow, and given great discouragement to the Free Trade party in Europe. As an exponent of the opinions of that party, Monsieur Chevalier may fairly be taken as one of the greatest authorities, and he says he is at a loss to explain "why the English Government, which, since 1846, has assumed to itself the great honour of being the standard-bearer of commercial freedom, should be content to endorse the policy of M. Thiers, whose object notoriously is to induce the world to walk backwards." The truth is, that without the assistance of England, M. Thiers would have found it absolutely impossible to carry out his reactionary policy. He distinctly acknowledged in his Presidential message that "the want of accord between France and England would render impossible any understanding with the other commercial powers, and that once England had refused to admit our tariffs, they would have stood no chance of being accepted elsewhere." The main reason for the course taken by her Majesty's Government probably was their anxiety to get rid of the surcharge imposed upon the British flag in France, a surcharge which they believed would inflict great injury on British commerce. No doubt there was some alarm expressed in this House. But it was most unfortunate that the Government had not waited for further experience of the operation of the *sur-tax* before taking any action. If we had left the question to be dealt with in France the tax would probably have been abolished in a short time, as a great outcry had been raised against it on account of its injurious effects upon French commerce. The principal shipping ports were up in arms against it. Rouen and Marseilles, Lyons and Dunkirk, Havre and Nantes were all loud in opposition to it. In the Paris correspondence of the London papers last October, it was stated that "there is not a port of any importance in the country, that is not sending up either deputations or remonstrances of some kind against an impost which has driven all their usual means of transport from their harbours, and left their produce to rot in their warehouses. Their misfortunes are aggravated by seeing the ports of neighbouring countries benefiting just in the degree in which they suffer." Nor would the effect of this impost have been an unmixed disadvantage for the time, even to English interests. I saw a statement in the papers last month, that owing to its effect in diverting the current of trade, certain shipping interests in Liverpool would have derived a considerable benefit in increased traffic. But it is now perfectly well understood that M. Thiers simply put on the tax to drive the British Government to renew negotiations with him for a new treaty, and Lord Granville fell into the snare. M. Thiers is a man of great astuteness, and it is understood that he is making use of other matters of policy to carry the treaty in which he feels so much interested. It is in fact doubtful whether the National Assembly will support the treaty if taken upon its own merits, but its ultimate disposal will depend entirely upon other considerations, affect-

ing the position of parties. All this makes it more unfortunate that we have had anything to do with it. So far I have dealt with the question as to whether there should be a treaty at all, but that point being conceded in the affirmative, the details of the Treaty become a matter of the gravest importance to Parliament. There are already doubts expressed as to the meaning of some parts of the Treaty arising from the usual ambiguity and want of precision of our Foreign Office. We agree to allow compensatory duties to be levied on British goods on account of taxes which France intends to impose upon the raw materials used by her manufacturers, but it appears that those taxes upon raw materials cannot be levied unless Germany, Austria, Italy, Holland, and Switzerland agree to have compensatory duties upon their goods, notwithstanding their treaties to the contrary, which unlike ours, will not expire until the end of the year 1877. The question then arises, if France is unable until 1877 to impose any taxes upon raw materials, are our goods, notwithstanding, to pay compensatory duties? I think we ought to have distinct information upon this point, or we may otherwise find that we have agreed to place ourselves at a great disadvantage in relation to other countries trading with France. A rumour has recently obtained currency to the effect that representatives of the British Government had been urging certain Continental Governments having treaties with France to concede what M. Thiers desired. I trust that Her Majesty's Government have adopted no such undignified course, and I shall be delighted to hear the rumour contradicted. But whatever may be the real intention of the Treaty in respect to the compensatory duties, there is no doubt that, as matters stand at present, England will be at a disadvantage with other countries in her trade with France until the year 1877. Up to that time she submits to be excluded from the "most favoured nation" clause. It is not my intention on this occasion to go into any question as to the amount of duties which are proposed to be levied. Any hon. gentleman in glancing at the schedules will see that the duties are very numerous and very complicated and must necessarily occasion great interference with trade. But I think I have a right to urge upon the Government, as a reason for submitting the Treaty to the consideration of the House, that several important Chambers of Commerce have expressed strong opinions against it. I hold in my hand reports of the proceedings of three of those Chambers, to which very briefly I wish to direct the attention of the House. The Macclesfield Chamber express their "entire disapproval of the policy of her Majesty's Government with reference to the adoption of the Anglo-French Treaty of 1872, which they regard as marking a step backward in the path of Free Trade," and "they look with confidence to members of Parliament to oppose with all their influence the adoption of such a retrogressive commercial policy." The Macclesfield Chamber also take the opportunity in their report of expressing an opinion in favour of the resolution which I am at present recommending to the adoption of the House. I will now quote an extract from the report of the Chamber of Commerce of Manchester. It says:—"The directors object to the sacrifice of principle involved in endorsing the policy of M. Thiers, and they share the conviction entertained by a large majority of the French Chambers

of Commerce and the French commercial public that the tax on raw materials will do little or nothing to relieve, even temporarily, the financial embarrassments of France ; and that by lending countenance and support to its imposition, the Government of this country would violate those principles of free trade and sound commercial policy by the observance of which alone they believe the true and ultimate prosperity of nations can be secured." The Bradford Chamber of Commerce appear to be equally dissatisfied with the Treaty, and the President of the Chamber at a recent meeting remarked—"That the terms conceded by the French Treaty to Bradford were perhaps more favourable than those obtained for any other trade in the kingdom, yet he could not but express his deep regret that the English Government had not been able to make further progress in the direction of free trade instead of returning to the dark ages of protection." I need not trouble the House with any further evidence of the dissatisfaction occasioned by the policy of the Government. My hon. and learned friend who will second this motion (Mr. Stavely Hill), will be able to tell us that his constituents are much dissatisfied with the Treaty. I dare say that the view entertained by my hon. and learned friend may differ in certain important points from my own, but at all events he represents the opinion of the manufacturers of Coventry that the Treaty is an objectionable one, and that it ought not to be adopted without the sanction of Parliament being previously obtained. I presume we shall be told that other Chambers of Commerce have yielded some measure of approval to the Treaty. But it must be remembered that Macclesfield, Manchester, and Bradford represent the silk, cotton, and woollen trades, which are three of the greatest interests affected by the proposals of M. Thiers. Our exports to France in 1871 amounted, in value of silk goods, to about £500,000 ; of cotton goods to £2,250,000 ; and of woollen goods to £3,250,000 ; making a total in value of one-third of our entire exports to France. Amongst the other heavy items of our French trade were coal, corn, machinery, iron, &c., which were not affected by the proposed compensatory duties, so that the remaining articles which were so affected were of minor importance compared with silk, woollen, and cotton goods. I think that the facts which I have now stated furnish very strong grounds in favour of the resolution which I have submitted, and in an especial manner justify me in believing that it is essential to the welfare of the trading community that Parliament should have an effectual means of considering the provisions of commercial treaties before they receive the ratification of the Crown.

No. III.

SPEECH ON THE SLAVE CIRCULAR OF THE GOVERNMENT.

Delivered in the Public Hall, Warrington, Jan. 12, 1876.

Ladies and Gentlemen,—I recollect, as I dare say most of you will recollect, that at the last general election it was a common saying that Toryism and Liberalism were very much alike, and that it mattered very little whether we had a Tory Government or a Liberal Government, because a Tory Government would be sure to follow the lines of policy laid down by the Liberals. I didn't take that view of the case, I must confess. You know we have this question asked—"Can the Ethiopian change his skin?" Now, we know we can whitewash the Ethiopian, but if you use the scrubbing brush, the black colour of the skin will very soon become visible; and so you may whitewash Toryism with Liberalism, but it only requires very little rubbing to prove that underneath Toryism exists after all. It is the real nature of Toryism to favour privileges and to oppose freedom. That is what the Tories have been doing for very many years past, and that is the inherent nature of their principles. We must not judge Toryism by a weak Tory Government. You know when Lord Derby and Mr. Disraeli were in power before, they were at the head of a very weak Government, and people were disposed to judge them by what they did as a weak Government. But now we have a strong Tory Government, and I think we shall find that the Tories, having the power, will manifest by degrees more of their true qualities than they have done on former occasions. It does seem to me that it is most intolerable that we should have a Government that should now venture to violate the great policy which has marked the conduct of affairs of this kingdom for so many centuries. I say that the principle of anti-slavery and of freedom has been one of the noblest principles that have marked the history of the British people. Why, so long ago as 800 years since, William the Conqueror drove from this country the last vestiges of the slave trade, which then lingered in Bristol, and since that time, and for many generations past, we have had the proud boast that no slave could exist on British soil, because the moment a slave set his foot on British soil he became a free man. We did not stop merely at that. We were not content with asserting the individual freedom of every man who stepped on British soil, but we determined to put down slavery in all our possessions, and that as slavery existed in the West Indian colonies we would abolish slavery there. That was the great struggle of 40 years ago. I recollect that great struggle, and the meetings that were held in Warrington—the anti-slavery meetings in the Old Wesleyan Chapel in Bank-street, and in the Friends' Meeting House; and the pro-slavery meetings in the Theatre in Scotland-road. I remember that at the pro-slavery meetings the platform was filled by Tories, and at the anti-slavery meetings the platform was filled by the leaders of the earnest Liberal party in Warrington. That great struggle, which took place 40 years ago, in favour of the abolition of slavery in our West Indian

provinces, fortunately ended in the triumph of freedom. The advocacy of freedom had been powerfully held forth by Willerforce and by Clarkson, and by the fiery eloquence of Henry Brougham, and as the result of the efforts of those great men, the public opinion of this country became saturated, so to speak, with anti-slavery doctrines, and we secured the emancipation of the West Indian slave. We did not stop there. We determined we would put a stop to the slave trade throughout the world. We determined that so long as England was mistress of the seas that the seas should not be made use of to transmit slaves from their native country into bondage in another country. The great John Wesley made the remark, which I think I heard quoted in my friend Mr. McMinnies' letter, that "the slave trade was the sum of all villainies;" and we felt as a Christian country that we should use our power to put a stop to the slave trade, and we were willing to make sacrifices with that view. We sent our armed cruisers over the oceans of the world in order to put a stop to this iniquitous traffic; and we sent an armed fleet of considerable extent to the West Coast of Africa in order to watch the coasts of Africa, to prevent slaves passing from Africa to South America. In the policy which we thus carried out we asserted the right to search—that is to say, our Government determined that any vessel which appeared to be a slave vessel, even if it put on the colours of France, or any other maritime country, should be searched by our cruisers in order to see whether it was really a slaver or not. This right of search created a very great amount of irritation on the part of America and on the part of France, but Lord Palmerston's Government didn't hesitate for one moment; they didn't talk then about the comity of nations, but they said, "We look upon the slave trade as piracy, as an offence against the laws of humanity, and therefore we say that so long as we have the control of the seas, so long we are determined to put a stop to this iniquitous traffic." Lord Palmerston and the Whig Government risked a war with France and also with America rather than give up the right of search, in order to prevent the abuse of the flags of those countries in the conveyance of slaves by slave vessels. The policy which I have glanced at has cost us many millions of money, and it has cost us thousands of lives of our British seamen; and I must say I feel that it is not to be tolerated one moment that a Tory Government should now step in in order to lower the flag of Great Britain and to dash down this great policy. Six months ago great indignation was caused by the first slave-trade circular of the Tory Government. I shall not dwell upon the peculiarities of that circular, but I will remind you that there was great indignation expressed, and that there was a great outcry from all parts of the kingdom against it, and I dare say you recollect the lame excuses that were put forward by Tory members of Parliament and the Tory Government, and by certain scribes in the newspaper press. It was said it was a mistake; that it was a hastily-written document; that it was indiscreetly expressed; and one luminary—I am not sure where that luminary was found, but one newspaper, a Tory luminary—set forth the idea that while Mr. Ward Hunt had been visiting at some country seat, a clerk in the Admiralty had ventured to send out this circular without proper authorisation. Even that excuse

seemed to be accepted by the Tories, because you remember on a former occasion, when Mr. Disraeli got into a difficulty in the House of Commons, he attributed the mistake, and all the confusion consequent thereon, to the way in which the clause in a certain Bill had been drafted by one of the subordinates of the Government ; and, in fact, I have seen on several occasions a disposition on the part of the Conservatives to lay the blame of misadventures upon subordinates instead of, like men, taking the responsibility upon their own shoulders, where it ought to rest. After a while—after a great deal of talk and a great many excuses by Tory members—Lord Derby made a most important speech. In the course of that speech he said that while this circular was open to some animadversion and difficulty arising from expressions used which had been misunderstood, the proposal itself included principles which had been approved by the highest legal authority ; and he made this statement at the very time he withdrew the circular. People did not think very much about this statement, but it really was most significant, and, as the result has proved, a most important statement, because it was a proof that while Lord Derby was prepared to alter the wording of his circular, he was not prepared to withdraw the main principle, which, he said, had the sanction of the highest legal authority. Well, now, who are the highest legal authorities ? I suppose chiefly Lord Chancellor Cairns. I presume Lord Chancellor Cairns must have given his legal authority to the proposals of the first slave trade circular, which Lord Derby, as representing the Foreign Office, and the Admiralty issued. When I think of Lord Cairns giving his authority to this proposal of the Tory Government, I cannot help venturing to look back to the days of another Lord Chancellor—Henry Brougham—and asking myself what would Henry Brougham have said if a proposal of this kind had been brought under his notice ? Would he not at once have denounced the proposal ? Would not the highest legal authority have been given in favour of freedom instead of slavery ? I am sure it would. However, gentlemen, the circular was withdrawn, and I must say I thought the Tories, having found out they had made a great blunder, would wipe it up and say nothing more about it. I did not think they would attempt anything more of this sort, but it seems Lord Derby, as I have just mentioned, meant something when he said the proposal had the sanction of the highest legal authority ; and, notwithstanding all the indignation which was expressed in regard to the former circular, we find a Conservative Government have re-issued this circular under a new form, and in reference to its spirit with very little alteration. Well, gentlemen, I think the second circular is a great deal more serious than the first. The first circular was issued without, perhaps, due consideration—at all events, the Government said it was issued without due consideration—and therefore they withdrew it. But this circular—the second circular—has evidently been before the Cabinet. It has been a Cabinet question ; it has been looked over carefully by various members of the Government, and they have come to the conclusion that it is right and proper, and must be supported. Therefore, when they issued the second circular, I think we have a right to consider that the credit of the Cabinet is so completely put upon this circular that any attempt to reverse it in the

House of Commons will be met by the whole Tory phalanx, and any proposal to overthrow it will be treated as a vote of want of confidence. Therefore we may look upon it as a very serious circumstance indeed, and I think that the fact that a Tory Government, having deliberately issued this second circular—having evidently staked their position and reputation upon it—is only another reason why throughout the country there should be no hesitation whatever on the part of anyone who values this great principle, in speaking out strongly and decidedly in opposition to it. This meeting has been called by the Liberal Club, and I should be sorry to suppose that there are not in Warrington some Conservatives, who have become on some account or other attached to the Conservative party, who cannot so far forget all those great principles which have been written in letters of gold upon the history of this country, as to be ready to support the Government in its present policy. I do hope that if my voice reaches any man in the ranks of the Conservative party who has conscience enough to wish to the extent of his ability to promote the interests of freedom, that, as an elector of this borough, and as an elector of this division of the county, he will not fail, while he may not be able to join us in what is no doubt a political meeting, by his private opinion to let those gentlemen know who are in a position of political authority, that if these proceedings are continued, his confidence, and the confidence of other enlightened and intelligent men will be necessarily withdrawn from the support of the party. Gentlemen, this will become a party question in the House of Commons. There will be a party vote upon it, and it will be for you electors of this borough and electors of the country to see how your representatives act in this matter. We know how one will act. We have the honour to be represented by the Home Secretary, and we know the Home Secretary, as a member of the Cabinet, is a consenting party to the issue of this second slave trade circular. In what respect is this second circular an improvement upon the first? Well, it is wrapt up in nicer language, and there are certain very harsh expressions which are removed. There is an attempt to disguise the sting of the whole affair; and there is an attempt, while really doing everything which the first circular proposed to do, to blind the eyes of the public in the hope that they may not distinguish the intention of the second circular. The *Times* newspaper, in a leader a few days ago, in speaking of the second circular, made the remark that “it is a remarkable product of a desire to run with the hare and hunt with the hounds—or rather to run with the slave and to hunt with the slave owner.” Well, now, what is this circular? It opens with a caution, which is expressed for the purpose of guiding the commanders of her Majesty’s ships in various parts of the world, and this caution is intended to prevent those gentlemen running any risk of taking fugitive slaves on board—at all events, to discourage any operation of that kind, because the circular reminds captains that her Majesty’s ships are not intended for the reception of persons other than their officers and crews. A witty friend of mine remarked the other day, considering the blundering of the Admiralty, in the way in which her Majesty’s ships are going to the bottom, that very few people would like to go into them. I can tell you that the Lords of the Admiralty are not always very

anxious to caution captains that their ships are not intended for anybody but officers and crews. When I had the honour of being in the House of Commons, I took a very great interest, as I dare say you all know, in the estimates and in the expenditure of different departments, and among other expenditure I often found there were charges for the entertainment of various distinguished strangers upon her Majesty's ships. Sometimes I found it was a bishop that was being carried over the billows of the ocean to the far-distant Sandwich Islands; at other times it might be some governor of some State, or some distinguished ambassador or consul, and very frequently a royal personage and his *suite*. Well, the little bill was sent in to the British people. You must not suppose there was any hesitation about receiving these distinguished people upon her Majesty's ships. They were not only received, but royally treated; and the captain of a vessel sent in his account to the Treasury, in order that he might be recouped for the extra expense he had been put to in their entertainment; and, as a matter of course, all these bills were regularly paid. So you see in regard to many people the Admiralty are not prepared to lay down a very strict rule, but I think I might go further. It is not unfrequently the case that some of her Majesty's ships lie in the Tagus, or in some part of the Mediterranean, or some other very agreeable and pleasant locality in the neighbourhood of some large and fashionable station, and I think if we narrowly looked into the accounts of people who were brought on to her Majesty's ships, we should find that a great many went on board in addition to the officers and the crews. However, the Admiralty is very anxious to lay down this rule, so that if any application is made to a captain by a fugitive slave in the middle of the Atlantic, he should bear in mind this great principle—her Majesty's ships are not intended for the reception of any persons except their officers and crews. Well now, the first part of the circular has reference to the course captains must take in the open ocean; and then, supposing by some chance—I do not know how it could occur, but it might happen—a fugitive slave sailing upon a raft, or perhaps in a still more marvellous manner, if a fugitive slave should stick up his head out of the waves, and claim protection of a captain, that captain would be bound under his circular to say, "My good fellow, you must bear in mind her Majesty's ships are not intended for the reception of any persons except officers and their crews." Then, according to the instructions contained in the circular, the captain must satisfy himself, before receiving the fugitive on board, that there is some sufficient ground in the particular case for thus receiving him. So that in the case supposed of a vessel in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean, and the colloquy between captain and escaped slave, he would say to him, "Now, what sufficient ground can you show why I should receive you upon this ship? I must understand exactly what ground you have to put before me," and then, having satisfied himself that there is adequate ground for receiving this poor struggling slave out of the water, the captain, under this circular, must take the slave on his vessel, and he may land him on some shore where he is not likely again to lose his freedom. In that respect, and in that respect only, is this circular any improvement upon the first circular, because, under the first circular, it was actually

infamously laid down that the captain should take this slave, picked up on the free ocean, and land him in the same place, if it was known, where he came from, and where he might again be taken into bondage. I do not think there is much chance of a slave putting his head up in the middle of the Atlantic, or sailing to a ship on a cast-away raft, but a second case is likely to occur, and that is, when one of her Majesty's ships is lying in what are called territorial waters of a slave-trading nation—that is to say, within three miles of the coast, and where the waters are considered to belong to the country adjoining, it is not at all unlikely that a slave might escape with great difficulty from his masters, and might, either by taking a boat, or in some other way, get upon one of her Majesty's vessels of war. That is really what this circular is intended to deal with. The possibility and probability is that when her Majesty's vessels are anchored near to land where slavery exists that it is not at all unlikely that a slave may escape from bondage, and present himself to the captain of the vessel, and claim British protection. What is the captain of the vessel to do then? I will tell you what he is to do. Unless he sees that this poor slave is in imminent danger of death, he is to refuse to allow him to go on board at all. That is his first step. But supposing he sees that this poor slave is in imminent danger of death, either from the violence of his pursuers or from the position in which he is placed—perhaps swimming for his life—then he may take him on board. Then what is he to do? Remember, his vessel is anchored within gun shot of the shore from where the slave has escaped. The captain, under this new circular, is not to inquire whether he is a fugitive slave or not—not that he won't know, but he must not inquire—but on the first convenient opportunity he must send him back in a boat to the land, where his slave-owning master will be waiting for him to pounce upon him, and to take him again into cruel bondage. That is what he is to do. "Should you, in order to save him from this danger, receive him, you ought not, after the danger is passed, to permit him to continue on board; but you will not entertain any demand for his surrender, or enter into any examination as to his *status*." No, you must not entertain any demand for his surrender; you must not allow that slave owner waiting on shore with his myrmidons to claim from a British ship his surrender; but the slave owner and his myrmidons well know, under these instructions, that the slave will in a short time be sent back to shore, where they will pounce upon him. I say this circular is not only disgraceful, but it is mean. It is mean because it attempts to disguise the infamy which is couched in it; and it is a disgrace to the Government which can issue such a document. All this is on account of the "comity of nations," in order that we may stand well with slave owners, and that there may be no unpleasantness between captains of vessels and owners of slaves on the coast. That is not the spirit of our forefathers. It is not the spirit of the old anti-slavery party. What we have always said has been this. We say the laws of humanity override the laws of any particular country. We say that slavery is a crime repugnant to the Christian conscience of the British nation, and that we can permit no conduct, nor hold any language which would seem to connive at this crime. We say that the

slave-holders are criminals, but we say that the slaves are not criminals. We say that the slaves are sufferers. Well, gentlemen, if this is so, while we are determined, as we always have been determined, to render no sanction to slavery whatever, it may not be necessary for us, nor would it be practicable, to go to those countries where slavery exists, and say—"Now, by force of arms, we will compel you to free all your slaves." We are not called upon to do that, but at all events we are called upon to do this—we are called upon to say that if we are in a position to render a helping hand to a slave, we must not refuse that helping hand. We are in a position to say that as our ships in former days sped over the ocean in order to put down the slave trade, so our ships shall never refuse hospitality to a slave who has escaped with his life and for his freedom. And now, gentlemen, look what these insensate members of the Government are doing by these slave trade circulars. They are giving up one of the greatest principles of liberty and of authority which we, as a maritime nation, possess. We have always contended that a British ship of war was part of the territory of England, and that under the British flag there was an asylum to which anyone who was oppressed might fly with confidence of support. We have held that principle before the world. Have you never heard of political refugees? Have you never heard of kings and other proscribed individuals, who have been flying for their lives, being taken upon British ships that have been in close contiguity to the countries from which these men have flown? Have we not always considered that for our English ships to be an asylum for political offenders was the great glory of this country, and how much more the glory that a British ship should be an asylum for an escaped slave? Why, during the old slave system of America there used to be what was called an underground railway to Canada, and the slaves from the South used to pass from house to house through the States of the North with the greatest secrecy and care, and with great self-denial by the anti-slavery party in North America, and when they got into Canada they were free—they were on British soil, and they were free. Did we talk about the comity of nations then? Did we tell the Canadians that Canada was not intended as a receptacle for fugitive slaves? What do you believe Canada would have said to us? What do you think would have been said about us by every intelligent tribunal in the world if that had been the case? Would it not be said that we were degrading the policy we had supported for generations, and yet it is precisely the same thing that the Government are doing with British ships. We say a British vessel is part of the territory of England, and although it may be anchored in the territorial waters of another state, yet under the folds of the flag of England there is freedom and right. And we may say that as soon as the slave puts his foot upon its planks he is as much free as though he had landed in Liverpool. Do not let us give up that great principle of British freedom and of British ships. Let us seek in our day and generation, at all events, to cast no stigma upon the glorious actions of our forefathers. Let us not allow the freedom and the rights of this country to slip from our feeble grasp, but let us be strong as our forefathers were strong. Let us hold up the flag of freedom which our forefathers held up, as the

flag of refuge, so that even a Tory Ministry, with a large majority behind it, cannot put back the destinies of England or cast a slur upon the glories of our country.

No. IV.

SPEECH ON THE TURKISH ATROCITIES IN BULGARIA.

Delivered in the Public Hall, Warrington, Sept. 13, 1876.

Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen,—My friend, Mr. Crosfield, has alluded to the fact that this meeting has been called by the Liberal party and not by the Mayor, and I have heard certain leading Conservative members of the Town Council, who have complained to me that the Liberal party should have given a party complexion to this movement, and should have called this meeting themselves, instead of calling it by a requisition to the Mayor. I can only say that if there had been a requisition to the Mayor, and had the meeting been called, I should have sought, as a townsman of Warrington, to have been present at that meeting. But I ask the question—Why was there not a requisition to the Mayor? These leading Conservative members of the Town Council, aldermen, and others, were just the men to have headed the requisition to the Mayor, and I charge them with having shrunk from getting up a requisition to the Mayor, and that we, as a Liberal party, have been called upon, in consequence of the absence of any general movement, to take the opportunity of protesting in the voice of the town, in the absence of the Mayor, against the most grievous crime that has ever been committed by the British Government. It is not a party question, we are told; and it is not a party question in one high sense, because it is a question of our common humanity. It is not a party question; for all men, belonging to all parties, ought to have united together in order to protest against these abominable Turkish atrocities, but we are met with this difficulty—that we can't move a step in the consideration of this question without framing an indictment against Her Majesty's Government, and the moment we frame an indictment against her Majesty's Government, we find Tories throughout the kingdom, to a greater or less extent, prepared to back up her Majesty's Government through thick and thin—willing to sacrifice these interests of humanity in order to promote the interests of their wretched party. There have been noble exceptions, and I am glad to acknowledge in the various meetings throughout the country that there have been some noble exceptions, in which Conservative men of influence have not hesitated to express a decided opinion on this question. There have been also, in an especial manner, noble examples among the bishops and clergy of this nation, and I am glad that the bishops and clergy of the Church of England have stepped forth, and have shown that they, at all events, in a matter of this kind, are not prepared to bow their consciences to mere party consideration, but they have pronounced with no uncertain voice against the course pursued by the Government and its officers, and have called on the Government

to take such steps as may be necessary to make reparation for the great injustice that has been committed. Had it not been so, I think it would have been a disgrace to our common Christianity. If the bishops and clergy had remained silent, I could hardly have supposed that they could have allowed Christian feeling to have had any great weight on their minds. It is not my intention to detail all these atrocities. You have all read the fearful stories in the papers; they have been spread far and wide over the kingdom. Perhaps there is not a household in this kingdom that has not felt a pang at the recital of these atrocities. Mothers, with their little children, have pictured what has been done in those countries; husbands have thought of their wives, wives of their husbands, and they have felt that the deepest emotions of their nature were called forth as they read those terrible accounts. Sir, I do not dwell upon them, not because I think they ought not to be dwelt upon. We must continue to dwell upon them again and again. We must be willing to be taunted, as certain supporters of the Government are taunting us, with being "atrocitarians" and "atrocitism mongers." We must be prepared to repeat this tale of suffering and injustice again and again, and I tell you why—because if we stop our hands, if we allow the pulse of public opinion to cease to beat so strongly as it does at present, rely upon it the great object of our efforts will be lost. You are not only fighting against the Turkish Government, but you are fighting against your own Government and against their policy, which is a bad policy. Let us bear in mind we have to free our national character in the eyes of the world from the stain of infamy that has been brought upon us by our own Government; and let us remember that this public opinion must be kept up to the mark, for hitherto Government has not shown sufficient signs that it is prepared to take an intelligent, just, and right course in accordance with the feelings and wishes of the British nation. We have only scotched this Foreign Office snake, we have not killed it. There are all the elements of mischief in the Foreign Office, and in the Government at the present moment, and it is only by keeping up this agitation that we can prevent this element of mischief bearing fruit. We know what the traditional policy of the Foreign Office has been. My honourable friend, Mr. Crosfield, has mentioned the Crimean war, which was a proof of that policy. It was a policy which was dictated at the time by a feeling and dread of the "Russian bugbear." Mr. Gladstone, in that noble pamphlet of his which he has published, calls this a "constant hobgoblin policy," which many a time has done good service on the stage, and he hopes and believes that it will no longer be able to do any such service. Mr. Gladstone, with his great mind, with his high aspirations, with his deep sympathies, cannot understand that these men who are in power now, and who have no such sympathies, no such high aspirations, should still allow this Russian bugbear, this hobgoblin that has marched the stage in former times, to march the stage still, and so allow the possibility of some interference with the integrity of Turkey, and the position of Turkey in Europe, giving an advantage to Russia to frighten them; and he cannot understand why that feeling should dictate that policy, which Lord Derby and his subordinate, Sir Henry

Elliot, have so conspicuously manifested during the recent sad events. The Crimean war, in my judgment, was a great blunder and a great crime ; but I don't want to dwell upon that—it is past. Many of us at the time thought it was a crime and a blunder. Two of the greatest statesmen that ever lived, men of great wisdom—Richard Cobden and John Bright, were scouted—my honourable friend (Mr. Crosfield) says stoned—in consequence of their protest against the course which the nation of England unfortunately took in a mad moment of excitement in support of the Government of that day. Russia at that time, knowing perfectly well that the Christian races of Turkey were treated with great injustice and cruelty, claimed to have the protection of these Christian races of Turkey, in order that they might not be subject to such cruelty and such injustice. We met this claim of Russia with the greatest suspicion. We said that her object was to get possession of Constantinople, and we joined ourselves with Turkey, in whose defence I am afraid to say the number of men we lost, and the amount of money which we expended on her behalf. We spent one hundred millions of money, and forty thousand lives on Turkey's behalf, and what did we get for it ? I think, from the expression of public opinion a short time ago, that everybody admitted that it was a great mistake. At all events, we did this : we assumed to ourselves, with the other great powers of Europe, that we would be protectors of the Christians of the Turkish Empire. We said, "We will not allow Russia to be your protector, but we, along with the other great powers, will be the protectors of the Christians of the Turkish Empire." In the Treaty of Paris of 1856, we had a clause inserted, the object of which was to secure the protection and advantage of the Christian population. The Sultan agreed in one of the articles of that treaty to issue a firman "for ameliorating the condition of his subjects without distinction of religion or race ; and, as a mark of his gracious intentions towards the Christian population of his empire, he intends to communicate this firman to the contracting powers ;" and we are told that it "emanates spontaneously from his sovereign will," and the article concludes with this emphatic proviso :—"It is clearly understood that this firman cannot in any case give to the said powers the right to interfere, either collectively or separately with his subjects, nor in the internal administration of his empire." That is twenty years ago, and it has been a perfect dead letter. We thought that by the large expenditure of blood and treasure we were going to gain something for the protection of the wretched Christians in the Turkish Empire, but nothing has been done from that day to this ; and it is the testimony of all travellers, and of all who know the condition of the country, that up to the present time the Christians in the Turkish empire have been subject to the greatest injustice and acts of tyrannical misrule on the part of the Turks. After these twenty years, during which the suffering Christians of Turkey have drank to the very dregs this bitter cup of Turkish tyranny, one province—Herzegovina—rose in insurrection. It was a small province, with a scattered population of poor industrious Christians. These people were treated with the greatest cruelty and oppression. They appealed again and again to the Turkish Government without any effect whatever, and I

hold in my hand a most interesting document, which a short time ago was sent to the Archbishop of Canterbury, signed by some of the bishops and priests and other public officials of Herzegovina. In that document they describe the sufferings they have been subject to for a number of years, and they say that their desire now is "to be equal in civilisation with our brothers in Servia and Austria;" and it goes on to say:—"We aspire to a life of comfort and happiness; we would fain live, in short, a life of progress and work, but the Turks drag us in the dust, and force us to lead a life of misery and suffering. We sow and the Turks reap. We toil and the Turk feeds on the fruit of our labour, leaving us for our share the bones to pick." Well, gentlemen, what do you think? Supposing you belonged to a country in which the Government was in the hands of a despotic power that so conducted the administration of the country that the fruit of your labours was taken from you by plunder and by force, that your domestic rights were invaded, that taxes of a most oppressive character were placed upon you, and this was done under circumstances which gave to the ruling classes and one section of the country privileges which were denied to you, would you not strive for liberty? Would you not raise the standard of freedom, and fight for the lives of your children, the honour of your wives and daughters, and for the safety and freedom of the industry of your sons? These noble men—I say noble because the man is noble who struggles for freedom—raised the standard of liberty in the wilds of Herzegovina, and they were prepared to resist the great power of the Turkish Empire; and when they were so standing up in favour of the rights of their countrymen and their homes, instead of receiving sympathy from the British Government, we had suspicion, we had doubts, we had dislike, we had the British Government itself doing everything in their power to put a stop to these noble men rising for their freedom. I ask, what has become of the noble boast of the British people that they are in favour of civil and religious liberty? Sir, I say that it is a noble British principle, but I charge on the Government of this country that they have been traitors to this ruling principle of British policy. Do you remember at the general election of 1874, Mr. Disraeli issued an address in which he said that the Conservative Government would have a "spirited foreign policy." A "spirited foreign policy," forsooth! their policy has been a mean and contemptible policy. It has been worse. It has been a policy that will leave a dark stain on the history, character, and Government of the British people. This has been the spirited foreign policy that Mr. Disraeli's Government have carried out during the last few months. In this appeal which these poor Herzegovinian bishops and priests made to the Archbishop of Canterbury, they told the Archbishop that the course which the English Government had taken in allying themselves with the Turkish Government had created amongst that population a great hatred towards the English name. They cannot understand how it is that the English people can have acted, through their Government, in such a manner, as far as possible to defeat the hopes of these men struggling for freedom. But, gentlemen, the British Government have got their reward. They have made the British name stink in the nostrils of these

poor Christians, but it is blest, it is applauded, it is held up, amongst the miserable, wretched, infamous Turks. An Englishman going amongst the Turks is received as a brother, he is treated as though he was an intimate ally of the Turkish empire, and when a correspondent of the *Daily News* went to the headquarters of the Turkish Army he was received with such shakings of the hand, and such brotherly feeling that he says, "I really think that just now in these parts an idea has gone abroad that the English are a Mahometan sect, differing only on some trifling doctrinal matter from the orthodox believer." It has come to a nice thing. Don't you think we are indebted to our Government for the fact that anyone of us who had happened to go amongst this people who stand in the face of heaven convicted of some of the blackest crimes that ever degraded the human race, would be received as a brother, as a member of the same religious body, only differing on some slight doctrinal opinion? This is what you owe to the British Government. I have said, and I repeat it, that all this comes of the policy and determination of the British Government to bolster up the Turkish Empire, because they fear lest under some conditions, by the destruction of the integrity of the Turkish Empire, some advantage will be given to Russia. I have read with great care the Blue Books that have been presented to Parliament. I have traced this wretched policy of the Foreign Office during the whole of the correspondence that has taken place from the commencement of the disturbance in Herzegovina, until the last day—which was the middle of August—on which these papers were published. I declare to you that all through these papers there runs this marked determination on the part of the Government to, if possible, stamp out, or assist in stamping out, this insurrection on the part of Herzegovina. There runs through the whole of these papers a feeling on the part of the Government and their agents that there must be no disturbance of the *status quo* of Turkey, a feeling which is every now and then expressed, that the "disturbance" in Herzegovina, as it is called, had been favoured by the Russian agents, and that it was intended to subserve Russian policy. The course which the Government have taken has been all through to get rid of what appeared to them a very dangerous element in the East by determining that these things should be kept quiet, no matter how miserable and wretched these people were, and that everybody should have the idea that the Eastern question was in such a position as to give nobody any trouble at all. On Saturday last, a very important speech was made by Lord Derby, explanatory of the conduct of the Government, and in its justification. I have read that speech with great regret and disappointment. Of all the members of the Tory Government there was no one of whom I had formed so high an opinion as Lord Derby. I remember in former years he expressed, upon this question itself, a very enlightened and very advanced opinion. I knew that upon other subjects he had also expressed enlightened and advanced opinions; and I was in hopes that in his position as Foreign Minister he would take a line which would tend to the advantage of the nation, and that at all events he would not be in any way alarmed by this Russian hobgoblin. Well, now, Lord Derby has made a speech which, in my opinion,

proves this, if it proves anything, that the Government have only given way just to the extent that they have been compelled to give way, and that they will not give way any further unless we contrive to press upon them the fact that the English people are determined they shall give way. I see this morning there is a telegram from Berlin in the morning papers, and I observed in that telegram that the correspondent states that "Lord Derby's reply to the deputation created a very unfavourable impression here," and the *North German Gazette* criticises it very severely, and says "if its telegraphic version be correct there is in the tone of the replies a defiance of public opinion in England and in Europe. His resolution to retain the fleet in Besika Bay, is here treated as an act of contempt for the harmony of diplomatic action in the impending crisis." I find I am trespassing on your time, but I should like to say a word about Lord Derby's speech, because I think we have a right to go to Lord Derby's speech, to see what the Government intend to do, or what at all events their feelings may be. I find that first of all Lord Derby alludes, as other members of the Government have done, to certain charges which have been brought against the Government of complicity in these crimes, as if they had been charged with desiring these atrocities to take place. Well, of course, all that is beside the mark. Nobody charges the Government with desiring these atrocities. Nobody supposes the Government would not have gladly prevented these atrocities if they could. That is not the charge, and we have no need to take that matter into our consideration. What we do charge the Government with is this, that in regard to these crimes, in the first place they did not take any proper means of getting to know what was occurring within a very short distance from Constantinople. When rumours reached them in regard to these crimes they put them aside, and treated them with indifference, and did not in any way attempt to follow them up to see if they were true or not, and the Government, in connection with the Turkish Government have never, during the whole of the time in which these terrible transactions have taken place, put that pressure on the Turkish Government which we say they might, and which they ought to have done, and which we believe if they had done they might probably have prevented many of the crimes which have taken place. Lord Derby goes on to argue that they did not know of these atrocities, and he says that even if they had known of them, it was quite clear any steps that might have been taken in regard to sending the fleet to Besika Bay, or in any way supporting the Turkish Government, could not have had the least effect on the ignorant hordes of miscreants who were guilty of these atrocities in Bulgaria. It is very easy indeed for Lord Derby to make that assertion. We don't suppose the Bashi-Bazouks were in any way influenced in their minds by the knowledge that the British Government were backing up Turkey. These horrible wretches knew nothing, I dare say, either about the British Government or about any other matter of international policy, but they had been set on by the Turkish Government themselves, and they knew all about it very well. It was the Turkish Government that had let loose these wretched Bashi-Bazouks and Circassians, men of no feeling and with no common sense of humanity ; and I say, and firmly

believe, that if the Government of this country had not shown such a strong sympathy with Turkey in her past career, and more recently in those diplomatic transactions with Herzegovina, I feel quite sure that Turkey never would have ventured to let loose those horrible, infamous people on the poor defenceless inhabitants of Bulgaria. Lord Derby says they did not know anything, and if they had, they would have been quite willing to assist, if possible, to their utmost in bringing this matter to a satisfactory solution. He says the fact of their not agreeing with the Berlin note was not a proof of their indifference to assist in bringing about pacification, but only proved that they did not approve of the mode in which the note was prepared. That was a very good reason, if they could not agree to assist Russia and Germany, for their saying "We don't exactly agree with your plans, but let us see if we can get another." But instead of that they say "We won't have your plan, and we won't suggest any other plan." And mark, what was their great objection to it? That in their judgment it would have been of greater service to the insurgents than to the Government of the Sultan. In fact, their great object was to take care no measure should be adopted which would be of the slightest service to the insurgents against the Sultan's Government. I venture to say that, without any fear of contradiction. In the Blue Books a great part of the correspondence has reference to this matter, and it is clear that the Government of this country were seeking, by every means in their power, to prevent Serbia, Montenegro, and Bosnia, assisting the insurgents of Herzegovina. But what was the consequence of our refusal to agree to the Berlin note? It was this, that the Turkish Government, knowing it had England at its back, refused to entertain it. It was not formally presented, but it was intimated that the proposal would not be accepted. As soon as that refusal was made known, or in a short time afterwards, Serbia and Montenegro, people of the same race and blood, and of the same religion as the Herzegovinians and Bosnians, entered into the contest and declared war against Turkey. I don't like war against Turkey. I don't like war myself, but I am disposed to think if Scotland was suffering under a similar yoke to Herzegovina, or to what she suffered from the hands of Turkey, I should have been prepared to join in a war in aid of my fellow-Christians against the oppressor. That was the feeling of these Servians. The Government evidently supposed these people were pushed forward by the influence of Russia, and not from any desire to support their fellow Christians. Without going into all the points, which is unnecessary, because I think the speech of Lord Derby is open to exception in almost every line, I wish to point out especially in this speech, that although all the atrocities have been brought under the notice of the Government, and proved to demonstration, Lord Derby still acts the part of an apologist for the Government of the Sultan. He says that they are bound to give everyone their due, even the Sultan of Turkey, and that the barbarities were not in any sense winked at or encouraged at Constantinople. I can only say, gentlemen, that this statement is utterly contrary to the fact, utterly contrary to the correspondence of the Blue Books laid before Parliament, and utterly contrary to the course which the Turkish Government have taken after

the atrocities had been committed. It was well known in Constantinople what was taking place in Bulgaria; the Government were in communication with the district of Bulgaria where these atrocities had actually taken place. Don't suppose for a moment that there was any difficulty of communication between Constantinople and Phillipopolis. There were railways and telegraphs. Didn't the Turkish Government know anything about it, think you? I have in my pocket an extract from a correspondence with the Turkish Government, sent as an official communication to the British Government on this very subject, signed "Reschid Pasha," who was the Foreign Minister of Turkey, and addressed "To Mussurus Pasha," the Ambassador of Turkey in England. I want you, gentlemen, to bear with me for a moment in answering the statement of Lord Derby, that these atrocities were in no sense winked at nor encouraged at Constantinople. Reschid Pasha writes this letter, in order that it may be laid before Lord Derby, and it is printed in the Blue Book, just laid on the table of the House of Commons, and dated May 14th, the day when these atrocities in the main had been completed. It was just at the beginning of May and up to the middle of May that these poor creatures were destroyed, and so brutally treated in the way the newspaper accounts have made known to us. No doubt the Turkish Government knew all about it, and they wrote to the Turkish Ambassador here in these words: "You have learnt by means of papers that troubles have lately arisen on the side of Tartar Bazaidjik, a district of Phillipopolis. Although these troubles are far from having the importance which malevolence has tried to attribute to them as forming a Bulgarian insurrection, nevertheless, the Government has exerted itself to take, from the first, energetic and effectual measures suitable to the occasion. These measures have happily produced the results which were justly to be expected from them. The disturbances have had limits set to them from the first, and at present they tend to subside." Effectual measures! Sixty or eighty villages burnt, thousands of men massacred, women and children flayed alive and cast into the flames!—all sorts of inhumanities practised, and this the Turkish Government, which, in the language of Lord Derby, had not in any sense winked at nor encouraged at Constantinople; this Reschid Pasha, wretched Pasha as he is, strokes his beard and thanks Allah that the measures exerted by the Government have been effectual and suitable for the occasion. This is not all. The very men who committed these atrocities, the generals in command of the army, and the officers of the Government, have been rewarded, decorated with marks of honour; and, of course, they were so decorated because they had taken these measures, which were effectual for the occasion. When we call on the Government to stop this; when we say that we hold them responsible, inasmuch as they are giving a sanction to the Turkish Government, which, on its own confession, must have known and did know of these atrocities—how are we met? It has no compassion. Even Lord Derby tried to imitate his chief, Mr. Disraeli, by attempting a little wit. It is wonderful how these members of the Tory Cabinet get into a jocular humour when they are talking about these frightful occurrences. Lord Derby said, "What can we do? You may just as well suppose that Lord Beaconsfield was the Sultan and that I am his

Grand Vizier." I dare say ; but it is not necessary for these gentlemen to be either Sultans or Prime Ministers. It is only necessary for these gentlemen to feel the pulse of England, and to say to Turkey, in the voice of the English people, "Hitherto we have protected your interests, but now it must come to an end." Lord Derby says we have no more right to interfere than France or Germany, or any other great Power ; and he says that neither the French, Germans, nor Italians are crying out and denouncing their Governments. No ; why not ? Because their Governments have done everything they could in the matter to stop the war. Germany—against whom there can be no charge of having any interested motives—has been foremost in every measure, willing to adopt any plan, or join any scheme which would tend to lessen the frightful events which are occurring in consequence of this war. The only Government which did refuse to join in signing the Berlin memorandum, and which has shown no disposition to adopt means by which this carnage might cease, is the British Government. The British Government is the only Government which, in the transactions that have occurred, has refrained from expressing its hatred of the barbarities against the inhabitants of these provinces, and the Germans and Italians and others denounce our Government as being parties to these great crimes, inasmuch as they did nothing to stop them. Then Lord Derby says that they have adopted a line of "strict neutrality ;" but non-intervention means destruction to the Herzegovinians. Just consider : here there is a small population fighting for its freedom against an empire of twenty to thirty millions of inhabitants, and it was his strict neutrality to say, "We will allow no one to help this little struggling people, but we will allow them to be crushed by this gigantic power, whatever the consequence and the result may be." And when Servia and Montenegro joined Herzegovina they adopted precisely the same policy. Throughout the whole of these transactions they have been keeping a ring. Suppose you saw some little diminutive child fighting with a great, big, lusty fellow, whose fist was like a sledge hammer, and all you people were to say, "Let's have a fight ; let's keep a ring, and see this great bulky fellow with his sledge hammer fist crack this little child's skull." That would be keeping a ring in the way that Lord Derby has been keeping a ring. I believe firmly if the British Government had been sincere in their sympathy for these struggling nationalities, there would have been a settlement of this question long ago ; but the Turkish Government, knowing that it could fall back upon the English Government for support, was resolved to resist better counsel and fight to the death against these nationalities, which are struggling to gain freedom. Lord Derby, at the close of his speech, says we must not ask the Government to do impossibilities, and then he makes a fling at various powers and says "it is all very well to talk about philanthropy, which is a good thing in its way, but we must bear in mind that foreign powers and politicians are not looking at the question from a philanthropic point of view." So there comes out the whole feeling which he supposes operates upon the other foreign powers, and he charges upon them that they have some object which induces the British Government to look with great suspicion on anything they propose, and which will lead the British Government to

hesitate about joining them in any movement which, in their judgment, would interfere with the integrity and position of Turkey. He charges us to be careful, because, he says, if we take a certain course against these Mussulmans we may, perhaps, make them eventually worse, and have a greater amount of carnage, and it would result in the Mahometans all over the world fighting against the Christians. Therefore, he would have us to deal leniently with these atrocities lest worse should follow. Is that the spirit of Englishmen? Are you going to be cowed and afraid of doing right simply because Lord Derby says there will be something worse if you do? Are you prepared to hold your hand simply because you have threats of this kind? The threat is baseless as the wind—there are no such prospects. It is only necessary for the Government to be genuine and sincere in its policy, and I believe the whole thing would become right. Let the Government say they have no jealousy nor suspicion of Russia, and that we are willing to act with the other Great Powers in securing freedom for the inhabitants of Bosnia, Bulgaria, and Herzegovina, and you will find that there will not be very great difficulty in bringing matters to a satisfactory conclusion. Don't you be misled by anything less. Don't you be misled by Lord Derby and the Government into trusting the promises of the Sultan again. The whole of the Blue Book is full of gross lies on the part of the Turkish Government and officials. They will give any amount of undertakings, but they never think of fulfilling any of the undertakings they have promised. In fact, they are not worth a moment's credence. Don't you be misled with any proposal to settle this matter by any undertaking on the part of the Turkish Government. Don't be satisfied simply because you will hear, in a day or two, three or four of these miscreants have been tried and probably convicted. The Turkish Government would have no hesitation in bow-stringing fifty of these Bashi-Bazouks, if by that means they could secure all their provinces. These men would go to their death cheerfully, as a public and patriotic duty, and feel it was their fate which was reserved for them, and if the Turkish Government could blind our eyes with the punishment of these offenders, no doubt they would be perfectly satisfied. That is not what we want. The great offender is the Turkish Government itself, and these men are only the wretched instruments of its violence and its tyranny. We must not be content until these poor suffering Christian people are freed from the control of the Turkish power. I am, as much as anyone, in favour of non-intervention, and I am disposed at all times to resist any meddling with foreign affairs. I believe a great deal of what is considered wise diplomacy is altogether a mischievous folly; but there are great principles of humanity that override all these political considerations in regard to the intercourse of nations. In my individual capacity, while I may be very unwilling to engage in any personal strife or physical force, yet, if I saw before my eyes a poor helpless young woman being outraged and violated by some ruffian—if I had a single arm of offence I would make short work of the villain. And I say, as one of the British nation, I am prepared to take the same course in aid of humanity, and say that if these great crimes continue, we, as the British nation, should be prepared to join with other civilised nations in the interests of the generality of

mankind, and put an end for ever to the most abominable and infamous despotism that ever disgraced the face of the earth.

No. V.

Speech delivered at a Peace Meeting, in the Public Hall, Warrington, Jan. 2, 1878.

Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen,—I must first of all claim your indulgence, which I am sure you will grant to me when I tell you that for the last two or three days I have been confined to my house with a severe attack of influenza, and all to-day I have been suffering from a very painful headache. Under ordinary circumstances I should certainly have not attended this public meeting at Warrington, deeming it prudent and right to stay at home. But I think this is not an ordinary occasion, and, although feeling unfitted for the duty which devolves upon me, I did desire to raise my voice in what I hope shortly will be a national chorus, declaring in tones that cannot be misunderstood that the people of England are determined that Lord Beaconsfield, even with the sanction and sympathy of the Queen herself, shall not drag this country into the wickedness and crime of an infamous war. I think we may claim for ourselves that we have met to-night for the protection of British interests—not the fancied British interests of the musty traditions of the Foreign Office, or of the subtle sophistries of diplomacy—but the actual real British interests that touch everyone of us, that affect our daily life, that have to do with the happiness and welfare of ourselves and our families. These are the British interests that we are met to-night to protect; and, unfortunately, we are met in a time of great commercial gloom and disaster, and when some of the most important British interests are under a cloud. You cannot take up any of the newspapers without seeing that in various districts of the country there are sufferings, distress—privations of a character that must appeal to the sympathies and feelings of all of us. I must for a moment or two allude to some of the circumstances under which districts of the country are now placed in consequence of the absence of employment. I saw the other day the following account in reference to South Wales; and in connection with the distress there it alludes to the fact that the war in the East had cut off the Black Sea trade, and that in consequence certain steamers that regularly called to load in the South Wales ports are now prevented from doing so. It states that “Of the 500 collieries in Glamorganshire and Monmouthshire only 20 are working full time. At Penarth the docks are almost deserted, and on Saturday there was not a single vessel under the coal tips. The war in the East has cut off the Black Sea trade entirely, the steamers employed in this trade regularly loading at Penarth. Hundreds of men are said to be in a starving condition. At Swansea the number of indoor paupers last week was 427; last year at the same period it was 264. At Mountain Ash, owing to the great distress, many colliers have gone to work

in the morning without food, leaving their families to beg for food during the day, and returned at night without anything to eat, and then only to receive the bread that the children had been able to procure by begging. At Treforest, near Pontypridd, the inhabitants—nearly the whole of whom are colliers—complain bitterly of being unable to obtain the mere necessities of life. At Pontypridd the office of the relieving officer is besieged for hours every evening by crowds of men, women, and children, many of the latter without shoes or stockings, the adults very scantily clothed and shivering with cold, the children crying for food. At the Pentre Rhondda many families have subsisted for days on potato peelings and wash intended for pigs. At Tonypandy several of the colliers have been known to have nothing but raw cabbage leaves to eat while at work. At Merthyr the distress is more intense, and covers a wider area than it did during the strike and lock-out of 1873. At Aberdare there is also a great amount of destitution, while hundreds of the Merthyr poor come over the mountain begging. One day last week a lady found in one of the cottages a widow with six children, who had been two days without food or fire. In another house she found a woman unable to stand from want of food. At Abercraze great distress prevails. The colliers have to walk two miles over the mountains to the Seven Sisters Collieries, which only work one or two days a week. Some families have been living on bread and tea twice a day for months." That is what is going on in an important district of manufacturing industry at the present moment. The reports I have read to you are taken from the *Manchester Examiner and Times* of a day or two ago. I have also reports not quite so bad, but still showing very great distress amongst the workpeople in Northumberland, Durham, and on the Tyne. There, most of the collieries and iron works have either stopped or are only working short time, and the people are exposed to great distress. In South Staffordshire—I again quote from the returns of the present week—"Great distress exists consequent upon the closing of the iron-works and collieries. On Saturday, a public meeting, convened by the Mayor, was held in Wolverhampton, to raise a fund for the relief of the distressed in the town and district. The distress was reported to be very severe, especially in the eastern portion of the town, where it was estimated that out of a population of 15,000 or 20,000, 10,000 were in actual want. Whole streets were inhabited by unemployed ironworkers and colliers. Shocking cases of destitution were adduced; families of eleven and nine had been compelled to sell bedding and clothing for food, many others had nothing but a bare crust in the house, children had from want of food lost within a month or two from 20lbs. to 25lbs. in weight, and numbers of mothers were clad in only one garment. Actual death from starvation was declared to be before hundreds of families unless a large fund was at once raised." Now, gentlemen, this is a report I have taken out of the *Manchester Examiner* this week. It is not only the iron and coal trades that are suffering—and they are suffering in a very serious manner—but there is a crisis coming upon the cotton trade; and I am very much afraid that unless there is some great change for the better, a very large number of mills in Lancashire will cease giving employment. This circle of distress is constantly widening.

We don't know what locality may next be reached by this destitution. It is no doubt at the best a sad lookout for British interests in this country, but those interests will be a thousandfold worse if it so happens that we are dragged into war. This employment—already becoming so scanty—will become less and less; this wage fund that already seems insufficient to employ thousands of honest workmen, ready to sell their labour, will become less valuable for the employment of labour; there will be more destitution; there will be more starvation; there will be an increased price of food; there will be a great additional weight of taxation, grinding down the springs of industry; and then there will be a national debt upon the shoulders of the British nation that will tend to keep us back for generations, not only in the competitive world, but very likely will also be a stab at the commercial supremacy of this country. It is said that whenever the Tories are in power we have bad trade. It so happens that that remark has been proved again and again. The Conservatives do not deny the fact, but they say it is a curious coincidence. I am not prepared to say whether it is true in the broad statement, but this I will say is true, that a Tory Government in their policy invariably adopt such measures as to make bad trade worse than it otherwise would be. In one respect the policy of Tory Governments is invariable. They always spend a great deal more money, and they always lay very much heavier taxation upon the people than Liberal Governments. The present Government are doing that. They are following the good old Tory custom of spending several millions a year more than their Liberal predecessors, and this money has to come out of your labour, not only pressing upon the wage fund of the country, but adding, no doubt, to the depression of trade under which we are now suffering. The present Government, not only by their extravagant expenditure and increase of taxation, press upon industry, but their mischievous policy is such that they are striking a great blow at the interests of the working men of this country, tending still further to injure the trade by creating apprehensions of new and further calamities. I have no hesitation in saying that, with a proper policy—with a decided policy—the Government might have prevented this war between Russia and Turkey. Remember, a gun cannot be fired in battle on the Continent without affecting us in England. There are no wars on the Continent that do not interfere with the demands on British industry. This war raging at present on the banks of the Danube is stopping orders coming to the forges in Bewsey-road and Dallam-lane. There are orders being stopped, and employment is being taken from working men in Warrington in consequence of this war that is raging in the Danubian provinces. The Government say that whatever may have been the origin of the war, they wish to keep this country out of war; and yet, while they say this, they act in such a manner as to create distrust and apprehension; so much so that capital is alarmed, the funds fall, the operations of commerce are impeded, and the new year opens at the present moment without one gleam of sunshine or one promise of hope. There used to be in ancient Rome a temple, which was called the Temple of Janus, and the god was represented as having two faces, and when the doors were closed the nation was at peace, and when they

were open the nation was at war. I can quite imagine that in those days the inhabitants of Rome might walk past this temple and anxiously scrutinise whether the doors were open or shut, in order that they might know whether their country was at peace or whether they were entering upon a period of commotion and of trouble. We are now looking at the Temple of Government anxiously, to ascertain whether this country of ours is to be at peace or war ; and the similitude is still more clear when we bear in mind that at the head of the Government is a Janus-like statesman, who may fitly represent the two-faced deity of ancient Rome. My charge against the Government is that their policy has not been a straightforward or honest one. It is a tortuous and uncertain policy, and is dangerous, because it is a policy of compromises, and the result of the struggles between two parties in the Cabinet. I tell you as a fact, about which there is no doubt whatever—I do not speak without personal knowledge from good authority as to what I am going to say, and it is confirmed by the general opinion of the country—that in the Cabinet there are two sections. At the head of one is Lord Beaconsfield, who is prepared to maintain the old traditions of the Foreign Office in favour of the independence and integrity of Turkey. He is also anxious to checkmate Russia, and if possible to humiliate, or at all events to put an affront upon the Emperor of Russia. The other section of the Cabinet is headed by Lord Salisbury. And that section of the Cabinet is in favour of guarantees being obtained for the future well government and happiness of the Christian inhabitants of the Turkish provinces, and is also prepared to treat Russia with fairness and proper consideration. These two parties in the Cabinet may, perhaps, for convenience be called “the war party” and “the peace party.” Sometimes one section gets the control—at all events, the lead—in the decisions of the Cabinet, and sometimes the other section, depending very much upon the varying circumstances of the Turkish war, and also to a very great extent upon the expression of public opinion at home. These two sections swing up and down like a pendulum in the operations of the Government—no, I am wrong, not like a pendulum, because that is regulated in its action. They swing with jerks, and they have this effect : when the war party take a certain course which creates a large amount of public apprehension, a short time afterwards it is followed by something proceeding from the peace party, which reassures the public, and makes the people feel that they are in safe hands. But there is this unfortunate circumstance connected with the action of these two sections in the Cabinet, that while the ascendancy of Lord Salisbury and Lord Derby leads to some declaration—some peaceful declaration—in words, which are subject to considerable modifications, or to the writing of despatches, that are so much waste paper, the ascendancy and malign influence of Lord Beaconsfield always manifests itself in the actual measures that the Cabinet take, which are of permanent influence, and which cannot be removed or obviated. That is a most important matter, and you will see as I go on why it becomes a matter of great importance in the present serious crisis. You recollect that when there was a European concert the great powers agreed to the Berlin Memorandum, which Lord Beaconsfield and his Government refused to support. This broke up

the concert of European powers, and Lord Beaconsfield then sent the British fleet to Besika Bay. Now, those were facts ; those were actual measures that can never be explained away by some honied language of Mr. Cross in the House of Commons, or of some strong despatch of Lord Derby, that is treated with contempt by the Turks. What our Government did for us as a country when they put a stop to the Berlin Memorandum was to break up the concert of the European Powers, and they did it in such a way as to be really insulting to the Emperors of Russia, Germany, and Austria. What they did in sending the fleet to Besika Bay was a menace to Russia, and an encouragement to Turkey ; and I believe that that very operation had more to do with the ultimate breaking out of war than any other circumstance that occurred during the preliminary negotiations. We had those Turkish atrocities in Bulgaria, and there was a strong feeling all over the country of horror and detestation against the Turkish Government. Lord Derby, in obedience to public feeling, wrote a strong despatch to the Sultan's Government. What did Lord Beaconsfield do ? Now, Lord Beaconsfield had in Constantinople the ambassador of England, Sir Henry Elliot, in whose opinions he entirely concurred. They were thoroughly at one in this question ; and notwithstanding this despatch of Lord Derby, which they were able to appeal to as showing the Government had done something, Lord Beaconsfield took care in his public speeches in England, and by the representations made by the English Ambassador at Constantinople, to let the Turkish Government know that the British Government were of opinion that the old British policy of maintaining the integrity and independence of Turkey was not to be given up simply because ten, twenty, or 30,000 Bulgarians were put to death under circumstances of the most horrible atrocity. Of course, with this action on the part of Lord Beaconsfield and his ambassador the despatch was waste paper, and I declare to you that since these dispatches of Lord Derby were sent, the Turks have done nothing whatever, either to punish the perpetrators of the atrocities, or, in fact, to prevent the possibility of outrages of an equal character occurring again wherever the Porte has the power to commit them. Then we came to the Conference at Constantinople. My friend Mr. Crosfield sees gleams of sunshine. I cannot ; but I have no doubt he saw a gleam of sunshine—and we all hoped there was a gleam of sunshine—when twelve months ago the Conference opened at Constantinople, and Lord Salisbury, the worthy representative of England, was sent over in order to assist the other powers in putting pressure upon Turkey. That was a concession no doubt to a certain extent to opinion in England, but what did Lord Beaconsfield do ? At that very moment he got up in the Mansion House and insulted Russia. He sent Lord Salisbury to Constantinople, but at the same time using by that speech the most insulting expressions towards Russia which encouraged Turkey to resist the actions of plenipotentiaries at the Conference. And then while Lord Salisbury was at the Conference, Sir H. Elliot, again acting for Lord Beaconsfield, did everything in his power to defeat the objects which the Government professed to have ; and the end of it was that again my Lord Beaconsfield's policy

triumphed, and the Conference came to an end which was not contemplated—that the other powers were content to submit to their proposals being rejected by the Turks. The Turks would not have rejected these proposals if they had not known that there was at the head of the British Cabinet a statesman who was prepared to carry out the old traditions of the Foreign Office, and to maintain the independence and integrity of Turkey at all hazards. When the war broke out, Mr. Cross, the Home Secretary, was authorised by the Cabinet to soothe public apprehension by declarations in the House of Commons in regard to British interests and to the conditional neutrality of this country. That was the expression of the peace section of the Cabinet, and it was quite clear—because I heard Mr. Cross make the statement myself in the House of Commons—that the very words had been settled upon by a decision of the Cabinet Council. But what immediately happened? Why, for months after this declaration the organs of Tory opinion—newspapers understood to be under the influence of Lord Beaconsfield—came out with tirades against Russia, and with strong arguments to the British people that they should support Turkey at all hazards; and with the statement that any success on the part of Russia must necessarily interfere with the interests of Great Britain; and that the Government ought to be prepared to step in, in order to defend these interests. Even subordinate members of the Government expressed the same opinion. Do you suppose for one moment that if Lord Beaconsfield had been thoroughly hearty in maintaining an absolute neutrality on the conditions laid down he would not have taken very good care that his subordinates should not influence public opinion against those conditions of neutrality? We are now arriving at perhaps the most important crisis in this history. The fall of Plevna demonstrated to the country—to everybody in fact, in Europe—that the Turks could not maintain much longer their unequal struggle with Russia. What happens then? My Lord Derby receives a deputation from certain associations in London—Russophobists—who are anxious to get the Government to take some immediate action to protect Turkey; and Lord Derby, no doubt carrying out the views of the peace section of the Cabinet, delivers a soothing speech to the deputation, and makes it appear that really there is no reason for apprehension or for British interference. But what takes place at the same time? Lord Beaconsfield's section of the Cabinet succeeded in getting their way in a thing being done of very serious consequence—they succeeded in calling Parliament together under circumstances of such unusual character, that naturally it is having a great effect both at home and abroad. And not only so, but at this time, when it must have been known that the announcement of the summoning of Parliament was sure to excite apprehension, and when it was clear that it would be made an opportunity of another move in the direction of Lord Beaconsfield's policy—Her Gracious Majesty can do no wrong, and no doubt she would be guided by the judicious counsel, if it were given, of her Prime Minister—at that moment the Queen goes to Hughenden Manor to pay a special visit to the Premier, and publishes a book, at least it is published under her authority and sanction—"The memoirs of the

Prince Consort"—full of anti-Russian notions and arguments. I for one will not yield to anyone in a feeling of proper loyalty to Her Most Gracious Majesty as the Constitutional monarch of this kingdom, but it is the great Constitutional principle in this country that "the King reigns and does not govern"—and it is our great Constitutional principle that in all those affairs having to do with the great interests of the people, the representatives of the people are the authority that should determine what should be the policy either in reference to home or foreign affairs. I have said that this calling of Parliament together is a most material circumstance, and far outweighs any mere honied language of Lord Derby or Mr. Cross. Now, what is the effect of Parliament being called together? You find it in the newspapers. There is no difficulty in ascertaining the result. Read the accounts from Turkey and you will see what the Turks believe about the calling of Parliament together. They do not hesitate to say and to believe that Parliament is called together for the purpose of adopting measures to back them up. What does Russia believe? Russia believes it is another menace, and you can find even amongst Russians there is a feeling that the British Government are trying to put pressure upon Russia with a view to save the interests of Turkey. The effect in this country has been to create grave apprehensions, and there is no doubt that when there seemed a few gleams of sunshine in the land in regard to reviving trade the calling of Parliament together at once swept away all expectation on the matter. I wish to point out the danger of all this. You cannot take this line without, on the one hand, strengthening the back of Turkey and inducing Turkey to resist any reasonable proposals on the part of Russia; and you cannot show yourselves so much in favour of Turkey without creating in Russia that amount of natural indignation and irritation on the part of the Emperor and his people which, in itself, is a danger. Some of the greatest and most disastrous wars that have ever afflicted mankind have arisen from trifling and unforeseen circumstances, which have had the effect of inducing nations to rush into war. I have very strong fear that this policy of creating alarm, this policy of irritating Russia, and of backing up the Turk, is only carried on by Lord Beaconsfield in the hope and expectation that some untoward incident or other might occur that will carry this country into a repetition of the madness that seized the English people at the time of the Crimean war. I say that there is a danger. There is another great danger, and it is this: the Government have driven themselves into a humiliating position, so far as regards European politics, in this respect, that they are left without an ally. Their policy has been a succession of disappointments, and the danger is that the Government may seek to escape from the mortification of this humiliating position by taking some course which might, perhaps, by a fresh and new excitement, relieve them from the unpleasant position which they now occupy. The *Times*, I observe, yesterday morning made a remark that "illusions play a large part in public as well as private life;" and I think it may be truly said that no statesmen ever existed under such a constant succession of illusions as the present Government of Great Britain. They seem to think that by diplomatic finesse, or the theatrical

and bellicose utterances of Lord Beaconsfield at the Mansion House, they can lead all the Governments of Europe by the nose. Why, they are now finding out that this is an illusion, and that the Great Powers will not be led by the nose by Lord Beaconsfield and the British Government, and the result is, that in consequence of the "dog in the manger" policy which the Ministry have been adopting for the past two years, the Great Powers of Europe are evidently prepared to take their own course without reference to the fussy self-assertions of Lord Beaconsfield and the other members of the English Cabinet. Is it surprising that the Government are left without an ally, when for the last two years they have been constantly avowing as the corner stone of their policy the doctrine of selfishness? What would you think if an individual in this town acted in a similar manner? Suppose that an individual were to go up and down Warrington saying, "My doctrine is No. 1; self is the first law of nature; I shall look at my own interests; I don't care for other people's interests; my interests may be very much against other people's interests, but I shall go for my interests." I know what you would think of such a man. You would give him a very wide berth, and have nothing to do with him. You would say, "This is a selfish fellow, and I cannot trust him." But that is what England has been doing for the last two years. They have said, "We will guide our policy by what we choose to say are British interests, and we will insist upon this, without any reference to the interests of other nations of Europe." All the Powers in Europe—the Great Powers in Europe—have a deep interest in the settlement of this question. Russia, Austria, and Germany are closely interested, and I will tell you why. Turkish misrule cannot continue upon the borders of those great empires without being a constant source of danger. They know that periodically the smouldering embers of insurrection burst forth, and then there is a great flame, and the whole of Europe is convulsed, and there are dangers of a serious character. Therefore, they say they want to have these evils put an end to. They want to have the Eastern Question settled upon a foundation that is likely to last. But what does Lord Beaconsfield say? What does he unfortunately make England say? He says this: "In the face of Europe we care nothing for the suffering millions of the Christian subjects of the Porte." He says, "We care nothing for the national sympathies of Russia, and for the enormous cost of blood and treasure these Turkish wars entail upon her;" and he makes us say, "We care nothing for the dangers of Austria with her mixed races; we care nothing for the interests of Germany in maintaining peace and concord between the great empires." What he does say is that "Before all, beyond all, and at any cost, we will maintain what we think to be British interests, no matter what injury or evil result may follow to the other Powers." What are the British interests the Premier talks about? He says the integrity and independence of Turkey is a British interest, notwithstanding that it is an infamous Government that every true Briton looks upon with the greatest horror and detestation; and he further says that the maintenance of Constantinople in Turkish hands is a British interest; and that the closing of the Dardanelles against ships of war is a British interest; and they are now beginning to say that any advance of Russia in Asia Minor would be detrimental to

British interests. And why do they say this? Simply because of our large Indian possessions thousands of miles away. We are like a miser looking over our gold, and dreading every small noise lest it should be a robber approaching us. This is the position which England occupies at the present moment in reference to those British interests. But if that gives us a right to control other nations, why not go further? Have we not an equal right to say that the Mediterranean shall be a British lake, because that would protect the opening of the Suez Canal? Nay, more; have we not a right to say it is a British interest that France, Germany, and Italy shall all keep down their fleets lest they should interfere with the Suez Canal. Of course, if a Government like England put itself into such an absurd position, expecting all the other countries in the world to submit to some fancied interest of their own, it must necessarily create a considerable amount of ill-feeling, and, I think, not a little contempt. I believe that the three Emperors have agreed upon their policy, and that the Emperor of Russia will take no step without the concurrence of Germany and Austria; and it may end in the three Empires settling what shall be done on the termination of the war, and leaving England out in the cold. And that is another great danger. I believe that the end of all this manœuvring and of the mischievous policy which Lord Beaconsfield has been pursuing, will be that England will be refused by the Great Powers to have any controlling voice in determining how certain arrangements shall be made. I believe that Lord Beaconsfield will do everything in his power at the present moment to break up the concert between the three Emperors. It is only to-day that you see in the newspapers that Sir H. Elliot has been sent to Vienna as her Majesty's Ambassador Extraordinary. This man, who looked with perfect indifference upon the destruction of large numbers of the Christian subjects of Turkey; this man, whose whole life and policy have been dictated for years past by a desire to thwart Russia and to back up Turkey; this man is sent out in the Queen's name to Vienna in order that he may, if possible, influence the Government of Austria and the Emperor of that country to raise some difficulty between the three Emperors that may possibly break up the European concert. I hope he will not succeed, because it would be of the greatest possible danger if there was any breaking up of the combined action of the three Emperors. But supposing he does not succeed; in that case I am afraid that Lord Beaconsfield will strenuously insist that, in the terms of peace between Russia and Turkey, there shall be such regard for what he chooses to recognise as British interests as to lead to a dispute; and it may naturally happen that the other powers may not take the same view as Great Britain with regard to questions of this kind. And then I am afraid that the policy of Lord Beaconsfield will be to make it appear to be a national affront to the honour of England, and so raise up the war feeling in this country against Russia. Having put these dangers before you, I may, for a moment, remind you, as we have come to the close of one and to the beginning of another year, of what the Government have accomplished by their policy. In the first place they have done nothing to elevate the condition of the Christian population in the East; they have lured Turkey into a dreadful war, threatening her very existence; so far from lessening

the influence of Russia in the East, they have given her new claims upon the gratitude of the Christian provinces of Turkey; and they have left England without an ally and without any just claim to have her voice heard in the terms of peace. Monsieur Thiers, in one of his celebrated speeches in reference to the Imperial Government of France, said that the Imperial Government had not left a single blunder to commit; but they afterwards committed a still greater blunder in declaring war against Germany. We might say with reference to our Government that they have, in their Eastern policy, committed every blunder save one; and it may be that they will, like the Imperial Government of France, commit a greater blunder than all by engaging in a Russian war. The Tory organs of the press are already urging upon the Government to commit this great blunder—or, rather, this great crime. I find in the *Standard* a day or two ago, in reference to the summoning of Parliament, that the House of Commons will be asked to vote a sum of money in order to increase our armaments; and it goes on to say, "The reason for this determination is to be found not so much in the victories of Russia as in the refusal of Austria and Germany to entertain the Porte's proposal to mediate. 'It is not the victory of the Russians, but the license which is given to Russia by the Powers to use that victory in her own way, which is the danger. England can never consent to the quarrel being arranged on these terms. She may even have cause to demur to a peace made directly between the belligerents.'" The *Daily Telegraph* "is quite sure that the English Government will demand funds to enable it to dictate peace at the point of the sword to the three Emperors," and do not suppose that when Parliament meets the Government will use violent language like that; they won't say that they want this money in order to menace the three Emperors; they will no doubt put up Sir Stafford Northcote, or Mr. Cross, or both, to clothe the proposal in soothing terms, with assurances that there is not the slightest object of a bellicose character. That will be what the peace section of the Cabinet will secure, but what will the war section of the Cabinet secure? They will secure the passing of a vote of credit of some millions of money with a view to enable them to increase the armaments of this country; and I venture to say that if such a vote of credit was proposed and passed by the House of Commons there is not a step they could take that would be more dangerous. I believe that it would be understood in Europe to be a menace not only to Russia, but to all the three emperors, and I have no doubt whatever that in regard to Turkey it would make the Turks more obstinate and jubilant, and would make them do as they did in the Crimean war—persist in the policy of irritating Russia, with the full belief that they would drag England at their backs, in order that Russia may be defeated and humiliated. There have been a number of ingenious explanations given of the calling of Parliament together, but I have no doubt the most probable explanation is that there will be a vote of credit proposed; and if it is proposed, having reference to the great effect it would have in Europe, I do sincerely trust that the Liberal party in the House of Commons, under the leadership of Lord Hartington and Mr. Gladstone, will determine to use every constitutional method to prevent this grant

of money being placed at the disposal of Her Majesty's Government. I hope that we shall fight the question with every determination that it is possible to adopt ; and I trust that the Liberal party will insist that before any such serious step as that is taken that the country shall be appealed to, to say whether it is prepared to give that confidence to Lord Beaconsfield's Government as to place millions in his hands, to be used, perhaps, in carrying on this wicked war. Then, I believe that outside the House of Commons there will be a great work to perform. We are doing part of the work this evening, and I hope in every large locality there will be strong manifestations of public opinion against any such proposal, because you may rely upon it that if the Tory Government do get this vote of credit, the next step will be that every supporter of the war policy in the Tory ranks will use every endeavour to carry the country into war. Why, even now members of the Government are using language which will certainly be characterised by probably serious consequences. I observe that the other day a member of the Cabinet, Lord John Manners, the Postmaster-General, was speaking at Grantham. I dare say most of you know something of the antecedents of Lord John Manners. He is mentioned in one of Mr. Disraeli's early novels, and he was one of the representatives of what was called in those days the Young England party. Among other qualifications he tried to be a poet, and amongst other lines he wrote these—

Let laws and learning, trade and commerce die,
But leave us still our old nobility.

You may naturally suppose that a member of the Government, of the calibre and character of Lord John Manners, should hardly be appealed to to show what the Government intend, but there are two reasons why I think I am justified in alluding to what he said at Grantham. One is, that he belongs to the war party in the Cabinet, and the other is that he may fairly be taken to be what is now become a classical expression in connection with a Cabinet, a "foolometer," in order that by his speech public opinion may be tested. He states in this speech, having referred to these conditions of British neutrality, that "the longer the war goes on the more difficult it may be to maintain that position, and certainly the more anxious the Government and the country become." Then he goes on to charge Mr. Gladstone and the Liberal party that by the action they took in denouncing the Turkish atrocities they strengthened Russia in the course that Russia had taken ; and therefore—according to Lord John Manners—endangered the peace of Europe. You see that Lord John Manners considers that it is Russia who is the party to blame. He does not consider for a moment that we were justified in denouncing Turkish atrocities, but he says that the effect of Mr. Gladstone's action was to make the Russians more determined to insist upon—what? Upon justice being done to the suffering Christian subjects of the Porte ! I will not dilate upon that point, as time is getting on, but the last part of his speech is, I think, so beautiful and so poetic that I may refer to it. He says—"If, unfortunately, in spite of all the earnest efforts of Her Majesty's Government to keep this country out of war, it should be necessary in the vindication of imperial interests and national honour to unsheath the sword, then, gentlemen, I

am expressing not an individual feeling, but the feeling of a united people, when I say that once unsheathed in such a cause, that sword must never return to its scabbard until it be entwined with the laurel of unquestioned victory and the lily of lasting peace." And the man who talks like this is a member of the British Cabinet, upon whose decisions depend some of the most serious interests that the British nation have at heart. He talks about the lily of lasting peace, and the first step that he proposes to take is to cut the lily down. We have peace, and then he talks about drawing the sword for the national honour. Now, there is nothing more dangerous than for a nation to suppose that it can go to war for some fancied national honour. The time was when individuals went to war by duelling, because they fancied that their honour was attacked. We put that down. We do not believe that it settles a man's honour in shooting another man to death, and we do not believe that a nation's honour can be justified by this brutal and barbarous system. He says they will never sheath the sword until it is entwined with the laurels of an unquestioned victory. It is all very well to talk about an unquestioned victory; but supposing that England should set herself against the determination of the three Emperors? Why, they have three millions of men under arms! How could you meet those great armies with your present 120,000 men? What do these madmen mean by talking about unsheathing the sword against Europe, and that then it must be never sheathed until it is entwined with the laurels of an unquestioned victory. It may happen that there may not be unquestioned victory; the probability is that it would not happen; but as for these laurels—well, my friend, Mr. Crosfield, has alluded to the victory we gained in the Crimean war, and I suppose we then twined our unsheathed swords with these laurels Lord John Manners talks about. Where are these laurels now? They are all withered and faded and gone; but you cannot bring back the thousands of lives that were lost in that war. You cannot relieve the country from the burden of the millions of money that were spent in the purchase of those laurels; and yet so far are the laurels faded that we see—and I think every conscientious man present must see—that as a country we came under serious responsibility when we gave Turkey another lease of 20 years in order to perpetrate these cruelties upon the province of Bulgaria. I have given you a quotation from one of her Majesty's Government; and I will now give you an extract from a speech which was made the other day by a leading Tory member of the House of Commons—I mean Mr. Baillie Cochrane, who represents the Isle of Wight, and has been in Parliament for a great number of years. You will judge from the tone of the speech what kind of opinion is likely to be used by members of the Tory party in reference to this question. He says—"That England must not take a second place in the councils of Europe, nor omit to protect its colonies. It was the Conservatives who would maintain England's greatness. If they followed Mr. Bright, Mr. Lowe, and Lord Hartington the glory of the country was set. Lord Russell could not imagine Mr. Gladstone reducing our great and glorious kingdom to the manufacture of calico and a market of cheap goods. When Parliament met in January, a decided course must be adopted,

and he hoped the Government would lay down some great principle of action, and that if it did not have a very large majority, it would at once appeal to the people. We ought now to try to terminate the dreadful slaughter, but no terms of peace should be made in which English interests were sacrificed. Other countries were not so much interested in the Eastern question as England. Lord Palmerston said the day would come when Russia would vie with the greatness of the Roman Empire. For heaven's sake let them do their best to keep back that evil. Treaties must not be violated, and Russian advances must be resisted. He did not blame Russia for wanting Constantinople. He should want it if he were a Russian. But, being an Englishman, he would move heaven and earth, and spend his last shilling, to prevent it. The question might soon be submitted—Would they have a cant and calico policy, or one to maintain and raise England's dignity? There were greater evils than even war." That's the way in which the Tory Government and the Tory party will look at our "cant" and our "calico policy." Of course, it is all cant to sympathise with poor suffering Christians in Bulgaria. And what is calico? Why should we sell calico? What does it matter? What has England to do with calico? Aye, without calico and iron where would England be, I should like to know. Where would those Tory landowners be if the trade of England were stamped out. It is all very well to look with contempt upon cant and calico; but I trust that the cant that the Liberal party have been indulging in for the last two years may still continue to be used; and I hope, as regards this policy of calico, that we, as the Liberal party, shall do everything in our power to promote the trading interests of this country. Lord Palmerston had been quoted by Mr. Cochrane to the effect that the day would come when Russia would become as extensive as the Roman Empire. Well, other nations are progressing in power as fast, if not faster than Russia. Russia is not relatively as powerful as she was 40 years ago. We are told that Russia swallows up territory. So do we. We swallow up land quite as fast as Russia does. Last year we swallowed up a territory in Africa as large as France. Don't for a moment allow your minds to be misled. All this question about Russian aggression is a delusion. There is no reason at all why we should allow it to affect our policy in the slightest degree. That is not the policy for England. Let us have a policy of confidence and goodwill amongst the nations of the earth. Let us not hold forth the gospel of selfishness, but let us seek to promote the prosperity of mankind. This country will have to determine whether on the one hand we shall continue to act in a spirit of strict neutrality, or whether, on the other, we shall rush immediately into this war. I hope and believe we shall decide upon "the better part," and that we shall hold our Government to the principle of strict neutrality. I believe if we do not interfere the result of this struggle will be that there will be independence and prosperity given to some of the fairest countries in Eastern Europe; and I believe that the Eastern question will be settled in a manner that will prevent future difficulties and commotion; but if, on the other hand, we go into war, it would indeed be difficult to see what disasters are in store for us. I believe it would put back the progress the country is likely to

make during the next few years, and it is not at all improbable that the permanent result would be that this beloved country of ours would lose its commercial supremacy in the world, and would sink from the proud position she now holds among the nations of the earth.

No. VI.

SPEECH ON IMPERIALISM.

Delivered at a Liberal Demonstration in Bolton, November 13th, 1878.

Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen,—The last time I had the honour of addressing a Bolton audience in this hall, was at the meeting called to congratulate the Liberals of Bolton upon the return of my excellent and honourable friend, Mr. Cross, as member for this borough. That success on the part of the Liberals of Bolton was a matter not only of interest to those within this district, but it was also a subject of congratulation throughout the country at large, because at that time the Liberal party were in circumstances of great discouragement and distress. In the general election of 1874 there was a great wave of Tory reaction, which swept from their seats in Parliament a large number of Liberal members, and by returning a majority of Tory representatives, cast out of power one of the greatest and most illustrious statesmen that ever ruled the destinies of Great Britain. For five years Mr. Gladstone had carried on the Government of this country, and during those five years he had by means of financial legislation, by the administration of reform, by national economy and reduction of taxation, brought this country to a pitch of commercial prosperity which was very rarely if ever before equalled. An ungrateful country turned Mr. Gladstone out of office, and by a large majority brought into power a certain remarkable and most nondescript politician in the person of Mr. Disraeli. In a series of articles of great ability, which have just appeared in the *Fortnightly Review*, upon the political adventures of Lord Beaconsfield, the writer remarked “that up to 1874, Mr. Disraeli was treated by the whole of the political Press in England as a joke,” although he was often treated, especially in the *Quarterly Review*, as a very misplaced and untimely “joke”; but the election of 1874 brought Mr. Disraeli into power at the head of a large Conservative majority, and for five years his influence has moulded the destinies of this kingdom, and we have had five years’ experience of Tory rule. Consider for a moment that this “joke of a statesman,” this “misplaced and untimely joke” has now become the master of your destinies. He has the unlimited and unprecedented confidence of the Queen; he is supported by a subservient majority in the House of Commons; he guides a weak Government, and he is admired and applauded by the Tory party throughout the kingdom. So the great fact we have to consider with reference to Lord Beaconsfield is this: that he has used this enormous power, which has been placed in his hands, to create an entire change in the British policy.

We have had a new departure in our national history. Lord Beaconsfield has, in fact, uprooted some of the greatest constitutional principles that we have been taught to hold dear and admire, and I charge upon Lord Beaconsfield that he is not only an unconstitutional minister, but that he is a revolutionary statesman. We have then a right to inquire what is this new policy of Lord Beaconsfield's, what has it accomplished during these five years of Tory rule, where is it leading us to, what are likely to be the results upon the future destinies of this country? These are rather serious questions, for I do not hesitate to express to you my strong conviction that at the present moment this nation is passing through one of the most critical periods of its history. In the life of a nation as well as in an individual, there is a period when circumstances arise calling for some important decision, which control and influence the whole future career; and I believe we, as a country, are at that point now, and that a great change is taking place in the policy of Great Britain. This policy has already produced serious evils, and I believe firmly that unless this policy is stopped it will involve this country in serious disaster. This new policy has been called "a policy of Imperialism." Now what is Imperialism? I observe that the Home Secretary (Mr. Cross), at Southport, the other day, said he "had not the slightest notion of what Imperialism meant." I will try to tell him what we mean by Imperialism. When we charge Lord Beaconsfield with inaugurating an Imperial policy, we mean that he is following the example of the French Empire, and seeking on the one hand to strangle our popular rights and liberties in the grasp of the personal rule of the sovereign, and to involve on the other the British nation in a selfish, immoral, and aggressive foreign policy. The policy of Lord Beaconsfield is a counterpart of what occurred in the French Empire, and I propose, if you will allow me, to refer to some important conversations which took place rather more than 25 years ago, between M. Thiers, an eminent French statesman, who was a Minister of Louis Napoleon, and the late Mr. Senior; and these conversations were published a short time ago. There was an article in the *Spectator* referring to these conversations, and the writer made these practical remarks:—"These conversations are full of teaching, and especially we would recommend them to the careful reading of that class of English politicians who are now displaying, in relation to England, precisely the same kind of big, boastful, pinchbeck patriotism which M. Thiers flaunted in Mr. Senior's eyes in relation to France. We are now told, in effect day after day, that the one thing to keep in view is the safety and prosperity of the British Empire—that we ought to be so full of that, that no other political aim need interest us seriously in comparison; that justice to other nations, the legitimate hopes of other races than the English, should count for little or nothing in that comparison; that, in a word, we should institute a sort of cult which might be called British Empire-worship, and leave all the other moral interests of the world to fight their own way as they might." That is Imperialism. In France they had a personal government, in the Emperor Napoleon they had a man who controlled that power, and France was continually pushing forward what were considered to be French interests before all the world.

Justice, truth, and moral considerations were nothing. What Napoleon wanted was to see and to elevate the Empire of France on a high pinnacle of Glory in the face of the world, and every means to control Europe and every other portion of mankind was fair, as it was necessary to control them in the interests of France, and there was prestige and glory to France, no matter how it had been come by. We have all witnessed the recent war in France, and what that country got by its seeking after glory and its thirst for prestige and power. We know what it all came to—how France was involved in the most disastrous war of modern times, and that Paris—the most beautiful city in the world—was besieged for months, and was exposed to miseries of the most painful descriptions; and how Napoleon had to come as a refugee to our shores, where he died under circumstances when there was no man to give him reverence. This history of the rise and fall of the French Empire is so recent that we could have supposed that the Government of Great Britain might be expected to read and remember the lesson that it teaches; but the Government will learn nothing. They, further than not learning lessons from history, are in fact following the example of France. They have set up a “Gospel of Selfishness,” as it has been called, or, in other words, “British Interests.” The Government claim to be the sole judges of what British interests demand; they disregard moral considerations of right and justice towards other nations; and they carry out their policy either by fraud, trickery, threats, or by the display of military and naval power. This is the “British Empire Worship” that we are called upon to fall down to—this is the Imperialism, which Mr. Robert Lowe called the “apotheosis of violence.” Now, let us see what this Imperialism has accomplished during the last five years of Tory rule? The Home Secretary said at Southport, in the speech to which I previously referred, that “if Imperialism means that the power of England at the present moment is more respected than it has been for the last 50 years then I do not think we have much cause to grumble.” I deny that the power of England is more respected than it has been for the last 50 years. I suppose that Mr. R. A. Cross believes that because of those naval and military displays which have taken place, we have impressed every nation with the power of England. But the nations of Europe never doubted the power of England. They know what is in England, and what she is prepared to do to support a policy which she endorses with her whole heart and soul. It would have been just as sensible for the Bank of England to send a man into Threadneedle Street with a bag full of sovereigns to satisfy the public that the Bank had reserves of millions in its cellars as for our Government to seek to impose upon foreign states by a Vote of Credit of £6,000,000, the calling out of the reserves, or the bringing of 10,000 troops from India to Malta. It is not by such displays that foreign governments are impressed, but by the knowledge of the latent resources of the mighty people of Great Britain. It is quite probable that the course taken by the Government has created much greater anxiety in foreign courts as to our intentions and policy than has been the case for the past 50 years. The Government have entered upon a policy of menace and disturbance,

of national jealousy, suspicion, and pretensions, and we are consequently regarded everywhere with anxiety and distrust. They very likely talk over the councils of England as they used to talk about France. As in former times they used to say, "What will Louis Napoleon do next?" they ask now, "What will Lord Beaconsfield do next?" Now that may be all very well for the glorification of Lord Beaconsfield, but it is not all very well for the interests of Great Britain. The interests of Great Britain suffer not only from actual war, but absolutely suffer from a mischievous diplomacy which keeps Europe disquieted, and which makes the nations of Europe feel themselves to be in hot water. I believe that so far from this country being more respected than it has been for the last 50 years, that one cannot read the press of Europe without coming to the conclusion that the character of England for straightforward honesty never stood so low as it does at the present time in Europe. It used to be the boast of England that with reference to her foreign policy and domestic institutions she was in favour of civil and religious liberty. We used to toast it at our dinners—"Civil and religious liberty all over the world." What has become of that toast? Do the men who are in the Government of the country show that they are in favour of civil and religious liberty all over the world, when in point of fact during the last three or four years the key note of their policy has been to keep under the thralldom of despotism a number of Christian nationalities struggling to be free? I will not attempt to go through the evidence of what has taken place during the last three or four years in relation to the Eastern question. In everything that has taken place you will find, if you carefully look at it, that Lord Beaconsfield's Government, so far from having sympathy with the Christian nationalities of the East, are at all times exerting the influence of England to maintain as far as possible the Turkish power; and I believe that it was within a very narrow shade of Lord Beaconsfield's Government carrying the country into war along with Turkey against Russia in order to maintain the independence and integrity of the Ottoman Empire; and the only reason why he did not carry the country into war was that on the one hand the intelligence of the people of England was outraged by those dreadful atrocities that occurred in the Christian provinces of Turkey, and on the other hand the voice of one which stirred by its eloquence of power the hearts and feelings of the country—the voice of Mr. Gladstone. His influence controlled Lord Beaconsfield, and so preserved the country from the horrors and infamy of such a war as that which it might otherwise have been brought into. After the war had taken place, and after Turkey had been defeated by Russia, there was that celebrated Berlin Conference; and the British plenipotentiaries—Lord Beaconsfield and Lord Salisbury—came back with flying colours. I did not see it. I was in London at the time, but not caring to observe that agreeable manifestation of folly I kept out of the way; but the plenipotentiaries were received with glory by a certain portion of the population of London. But what is the fact? Just look at the proceedings of the Conference. Let the men with intelligent heads upon their shoulders look at the proceedings, and say if they are not humiliated by the spectacle. I venture to charge the

British Government in connection with the Berlin Conference with trickery and treachery all round. The British plenipotentiaries went into that Conference blowing loud trumpets. They said that Great Britain was to be the champion of the law of Europe, that England was to maintain the rights of treaties. Lord Beaconsfield said in the House of Lords, in declaring that the Government intended to enforce the essential principles of the law of nations, that no power could liberate itself from engagements unless with the consent of the contracting parties. That, exclaimed Lord Beaconsfield, was the key-note of their policy, the diapason of their diplomacy. Diapason means a combination of the most exquisite harmony of sound, but the diapason of the diplomacy nearly led us into war with Russia. It certainly created distrust all over Europe, because all the powers were prepared to enter into that Conference except ourselves, who said that the Conference should not be held unless Russia was prepared to submit entirely that she had no right to withdraw from treaties without the consent of the co-signatories. At the time of all that bombast and boast Lord Beaconsfield did go into the Conference, and he went there with a secret agreement with Russia in one pocket and a bribe from Turkey in the other. I would like to know what you would think of any man who was guilty of conduct like that? Any straightforward, honest Englishman would characterise that as moral turpitude, meanness, and trickery, and altogether disgraceful to the character and credit of England. But do you think that conduct like that is likely to make this country stand higher in the judgment of Europe than it has done during the last 50 years? Look at the papers of other countries. I will leave out Austria. I do not know what Austria might say about it; they might praise England for aught I know. I am strongly suspicious there was a third secret agreement, one that bribed Austria by handing over Bosnia and Herzegovina to her; but, unfortunately for this country, there was no Foreign Office clerk to sell it to the *Globe* newspaper. I will, therefore, leave out Austria as not worth notice, as I believe any alliance with Austria would be like resting upon a broken reed; for the conduct of Austria in the Crimean war, and her conduct to her own subjects, ought to teach us not to rest upon her. But look at Germany. She despises our fussy kind of policy; and how can Bismarck look favourably upon us when we are acting in this uncertain manner? Italy says we have given up the rights of nationalities, and that there is no credit in acting with England for so doing. Russia, of course, hates us. We have done everything in our power to create the greatest animosity towards us, and France charges us absolutely (and, I believe, truly) with a breach of faith. And why does France so charge us? France was our ally during the Crimean war. As far as we are concerned it was of the greatest importance that we should act towards her with perfect honour and honesty; that we should act in a straightforward manner, and that we should let others know that we wanted to go hand in hand with her in all the measures that might be necessary for the pacification of Europe and for the development of the interests of the world. But what did we do? France, as you know, is a Mediterranean power. She has a great

interest in Syria and Egypt, and yet without any arrangement with France we entered into a convention with Turkey, a secret convention under which we were to have possession of Cyprus. As a matter of course France was jealous of this proceeding on the part of England, and I observe that the *Journal des Débats*, one of the most influential papers in France, said "Englishmen must not allow themselves to be deceived in the matter. The secrecy and mystery, the jealous and suspicious care with which England conducted the Cyprus negotiations, could not fail to wound us;" and the writer went on to the period when by the annexation of Savoy and Nice there was a great outcry in this country. I recollect it perfectly well. Lord Palmerston, the Foreign Secretary at the time, was excessively annoyed; in fact, it strained for a moment our relations with France to almost the point of breaking out into war, because it had been carried on in a secret and underhand manner. We had done the same thing with Cyprus, and they resented it, and said if France had not been weakened by the recent German war, and been in the possession of her ordinary strength and power, that England would never have ventured to take a course of that kind, so capable of wounding the national feeling of France. I complain of the secrecy, as well as the French. That convention was carried on in a secret manner, and the Parliament of England had no information upon it until some considerable time after the arrangement had been made. Nor had the Government of France any information. France sent her plenipotentiaries to the Berlin Congress, and they there met the English plenipotentiaries, but they had not the slightest idea that England had made the arrangement with Turkey, for if they had it would have affected the course they took at the Congress. Well, I need not dwell upon the feeling which is entertained towards England in Europe, but I do believe that it is entirely contrary to British interests that we should carry on such a foreign policy as to excite jealousy and feelings of soreness and distrust on the part of European Powers. It might happen that under some conditions, and some unfavourable circumstances to ourselves, that we should find the European Powers joining together in a manner which would tend very seriously to interfere with our interests, and they might do so in order to check what they might consider the overweening arrogance and presumption, and the unfair pretensions of the British Government. I have spoken about the effect of the action of her Majesty's Government upon the Powers of Europe. But there is another aspect which we have to consider, and it is this—what course has her Majesty's Government taken in regard to the several races of Turkey? I consider that is a question which touches very nearly the interests of Great Britain. I believe that the past traditions of this country, that the sympathies of England all tend in the direction of giving aid to nationalities struggling for freedom, and I say Lord Beaconsfield's government has violated those traditions and sympathies. I find that in the speech which Lord Beaconsfield made last Saturday at the Mansion House—a speech which I venture to say in all its important points was, as usual in his speeches, contrary to facts, contrary to evidence—Lord Beaconsfield, in that speech, in which there was a great deal of the Imperial tone and the Imperial temper of the

French Empire in regard to the criticisms which had been urged against the policy of the Government, said in his usual grandiloquent terms—"the Government of the world is carried on by Sovereigns and statesmen, not by anonymous paragraphists or the hair-brained chatter of irresponsible frivolity." The government of the world is carried on by sovereigns and statesmen ! I recollect reading on one occasion that an eminent European statesman said to his son in regard to the management of Governments by statesmen, "behold, my son, with how little wisdom the world is governed." The Government has been blind to the lessons of history, and a Government which is blind to the lessons which are taught by history is guilty of folly as is the man who stupidly refuses to be guided by experience. You know what the Government has done about Turkey. Why did they not look at the history of Turkey ? The history of Turkey is well known ; there is no disguise about it. The Turks came into Europe four centuries ago. They swept like a devouring tide over the fairest provinces of Europe. Those provinces were inhabited by an industrious, prosperous population. There were large towns, with active industry, but this tide of frightful despotism swept over Eastern Europe, and submerged the whole of the industrial population in one depth of ruin. In every case the results were the same. All those towns, many of them flourishing, were swept from the face of the land, and the population sank lower and lower into distress. Their numbers were diminished, and everything like happiness swept from off the face of the earth. During those 400 years industry was robbed of its reward, life sacrificed under the most frivolous pretext, the honour of women violated, and children sold into slavery for the vilest purposes ; and yet, with all this experience of the effect of the Turkish rule in Europe, I have heard members of the House of Commons say, and I have no doubt my hon. friend in the chair has heard similar statements, that there is nothing to choose between the Greek Christian, the Slav, and the Turk. I do not for a moment doubt that there is great ignorance, great superstition ; and it would be surprising if there were not after these four centuries of crushing despotism. I have no doubt the Christian faith of these people is held in a very low form, but I have this belief in the influence of Christianity, that it will shine even through a dense medium, and sow a seed of future prosperity ; while in Mahomedanism the whole history of the faith, every evidence that can be accumulated as to those professing that faith, is entirely opposed to progress and prosperity, and sinks the professors and those subject to it down to the very lowest depths of ignominy and ruin. I will now tell you the effect when this rule of Mahomedanism had receded. We have had an experience of that during the last 100 years. We have found some portion of Eastern Europe held for generations under the control of Turkey, which has become free from that control. What has been the effect there ? It has been marvellous. There has not been a single country in the East, formerly held by Turkey, and which has become free from it, sprung up into a new State, which has not national prosperity. Look at Greece. It is only fifty years since the independence of Greece was secured. It is most marvellous, the improvement in the state of Greece. I have a statement before me, taken from the *Statesmen's Year*

Book, which shows that during the last fifty years ten new cities have been founded, and twenty-three old towns, including Athens, have been rebuilt, besides many villages. The present population is more than double what it was fifty years ago. It is now one and a half millions, and the trade with Great Britain is three millions. I can also mention Servia, which, since its emancipation from Turkish rule, has made wonderful progress, and Bulgaria and the Danubian Provinces have also made marvellous progress. If these facts are true—and there can be no denying them—will any man tell me that it is not to the interest of Great Britain that this great emancipation of nations should take place from the Turkish yoke? There is not a working man in this room who, either directly or indirectly, has not the value of his labour increased in the advance, and civilisation, and prosperity of European nations. Why should not that go on? We have just had a splendid opportunity. The Berlin Conference gave us that opportunity. We should have created a new Bulgaria, and have given to Greece some new provinces, and rectified that blunder with Greece, when, instead of having new provinces, she was mapped out in a limited area. It is clear if we could give to these populations the advantages which Servia, Roumania, and Greece enjoy we should have raised a new market for British manufactures. We should, at all events, have created a new growth of prosperity in Europe, and there is no doubt that in the course of a few years the prosperity of those populations would add to the trade, and, therefore, to the value of the industry of the world. Why have we not done it? Lord Beaconsfield stops the way. He opposes any such development of the independence and prosperity of the Eastern nations subject to Turkey, and he does that because he considers that development of national rights and independence would be opposed to British Imperial interests. Lord Beaconsfield has made an absolute choice. He prefers to take by the hand the rotten and decaying corpse of Turkey, rather than join in an alliance with nations having new life and the promise of future vigour. Lord Derby alluded to this subject some years ago in relation to matters upon which I have spoken, and I cannot mention Lord Derby's name without saying, particularly in Lancashire, where you have long known the house of Stanley, and regarded them with pride and respect—I cannot mention his name without saying I think the whole country is indebted to him for his noble conscientiousness, his anxiety to promote the best interests of Britain, superior to the claims of his party; and I believe, though Lord Derby has not been able to accomplish as much as he would have liked to accomplish in controlling the Prime Minister, I believe that his influence was effectual, among other things, in preventing steps being taken which would probably have involved this country in war. Lord Derby said, in a remarkable speech he delivered some years ago, "I think we are making for ourselves enemies of races which will very soon become in Eastern Europe dominant races, and we are keeping back races from which, I think, we, as the great traders of the world, should be the great gainers; and we are doing this for no advantage, present or prospective." I think that is the condemnation of Lord Beaconsfield's policy, and I think it would justify me in saying that policy is entirely detrimental to British interests, and is calculated to retard the prosperity

in which we should, directly or indirectly, have a share. But in that speech of Lord Beaconsfield's to which I have alluded, and which he delivered on Saturday night at the Mansion House, he said in regard to the Berlin Conference, "I think it at this moment quite impossible that any of the signatories to the Treaty of Berlin should attempt in any way to withdraw from their engagements. I can say this on the part of her Majesty's Government, that it is their intention and their determination that the Treaty of Berlin shall be carried out in spirit and to the letter." No doubt that was a very strong statement on the part of Lord Beaconsfield. But he went on to say he had no doubt whatever that in that determination to maintain the Treaty of Berlin in every particular the Government would receive the earnest support of the country, and that the country would give the Government their support with all their energy and resources. I do not hesitate to say that I do not believe that even the bluster and the bounce of Lord Beaconsfield can save the Treaty of Berlin. I will tell you why. The Treaty of Berlin carries with it the seeds of its own destruction. No treaty can last which denies the rights of nationalities. That is the history of the treaties of the world. All the elements of conflagration exist at the present moment in the districts with which that treaty has to deal, and that conflagration may burst out at any moment. It has burst out in Southern Bulgaria, as it should be called, and in Macedonia. What does it mean? The Bulgarians say, "We have a right to our independence; we will not submit to the control and the tyranny of the Turks; and, rather than submit to it, we will resist it to the death. Have the people of England sunk so low that they would give all their energies and support to the Government, a Government which avows it would crush down those rising liberties of these struggling people? Is that English? Is that your policy? What would your forefathers have done under similar circumstances? Let us consider that every nation has a right to its own independence and freedom, and that he is the patriot who seeks to struggle from under any yoke of tyranny, and that if we try to fasten the chain of tyranny upon an unwilling people we are degrading the character of the English people, and should sink ourselves into infamy. I have now glanced very briefly, and as rapidly as I could, at what this policy of Imperialism has been doing during the last three or four years, and now I come to what it is leading, and what are likely to be its future results upon this country; and here we meet with a great difficulty. One of the worst features of the case is that we can not calculate from one day to another what might happen. We live under a Government which has stretched the prerogatives of the Crown to the utmost, and is ready to take the most serious steps, involving the country without consulting the representatives of the people. Parliament is practically ignored. We know that on a very recent occasion this important treaty—this Turkish treaty under which the British Government took Cyprus, and engaged to defend the Asiatic territories of Turkey—was a secret agreement, and one in which the representatives of the people had no voice. It was taken by the prerogative of the Crown, and those gentlemen, the members of the Cabinet, fastened the people, and their descendants, it might be, to an obligation so

onerous that it might involve us or them in a war, the effect of which it is impossible to calculate upon. Is there anything like right in that? Are we Englishmen and free men to have our interests played with as if it were a game of sport without having any voice? Are we to be bound hand and foot by agreements affecting us and our descendants without being able to control them? And are we to be told it is the prerogative of the Queen, and we are not to discuss it? I for one would never submit to any such agreement. Now, I cannot before sitting down but allude to a matter which I am afraid will have a very important bearing upon our future interests, and probably the welfare of many in this room. I allude to another of those steps taken in darkness and mystery, and without consultation with the representatives of the people. I mean the threatened war with Afghanistan. It is impossible for me to overrate the importance of the step the Government are now taking. They are taking it, as I have already stated, after having kept back from Parliament information Parliament were entitled to, and information which they had promised; and they have broken that promise. The Government have adopted in relation to India, as they have in relation to Europe, an entirely new line of policy. Let this be understood, that the course the Government are now about to take, or are taking, in regard to Afghanistan, is a course directly in the teeth of the policy of this country for the last 30 years, contrary to the best judgment of the most eminent administrators of Indian affairs, and, I am afraid I must add, of every sentiment of honour, and justice, and right. We are told to trust the Government. We are told we must have patience. Patience! when our trusting the Government and having patience might mean that our country might be involved in a war so wicked, that I defy any man who carefully considers the subject to justify the bloodshed that might arise out of the war. We are told in the papers the only object the Government had was to protect the interests of India by having a British representative with the Ameer of Afghanistan, and that any proposal so made had been received with contumely and insult, and that our representative who went to communicate our wishes to the ruler of Afghanistan was threatened, and was in fact treated with the greatest insult; and, of course, having this representation, it was expected that the English people's blood would boil, and that we should again get into that spirit which would induce us to say "We must chastise the insolence of this ruler of Afghanistan." But we begin by degrees to find out the truth. There was no insult. The man who went (Sir Neville Chamberlain) was fairly treated, except that the Ameer said he did not want a representative there. If I could tell you all of our dealings with Afghanistan for the last 40 years, I think you would not feel that they reflected any honour or glory upon the British name. We took a course which has been condemned in history as being unjust, and as being in violation of treaties. Forty years ago we interfered in Afghanistan, and we tried to place upon the throne of Afghan a ruler who was distasteful to the inhabitants of the country, and we brought away from Afghanistan, and held in honourable imprisonment, the father of the present Ameer, and who was desired by the people to be the ruler of the country. If I had time I could describe what took place during the occupancy by

British troops of Afghanistan. If you will read Sir Archibald Alison's history of what took place then, you will find what will excite your bitterest feelings. We held the puppet of a monarch on the throne, and in fact acted, by means of the officers of our own forces, in such a manner as to make the British name stink in the nostrils of the Afghans; so much so, that when that invading force was driven from the country—and it was a dreadful fight and dreadful carnage, but even the historian said it was a just retribution to England for the breach of treaties—of about 13,000 men who came through the Khyber Pass there was scarcely one—there was one man, and all the rest were slaughtered in their passage through the Pass. We brought it upon ourselves, we had no right to interfere, and no right to go to Afghanistan at all; but although we brought this upon ourselves, we determined that it was necessary for British prestige that we should punish the Afghans. We sent our forces into Afghanistan and inflicted upon them a very great punishment no doubt, and then we sent back Dost Mahomed, the ruler they wanted, and who before that was a prisoner; and we expected that having left in the minds of the Afghans the most bitter memories of our cruelties and oppressions, that they would be attached to us by the bonds of friendship. But we could not hold the country, and left it, and from that time to this there has been a feeling sometimes of friendliness and sometimes of suspicion, and the result was that the best of authorities on Indian matters are of opinion that what we ought to do would be to avoid entangling ourselves in Indian affairs, and rather to maintain our present frontier, which is admirably situated and protected by great mountains; and those authorities believe that there is not the slightest danger in the world that anything would occur at Cabul or in the territories of the Ameer of Afghan that could affect British interests at all. Those authorities believe that by the policy we have recently taken, we have driven the Ameer into the arms of Russia; and, on the other hand, that if we had remained passive, the jealousy would have been directed towards Russia instead of being directed against ourselves. But because an independent ruler refused to receive an envoy, or in any way to enter into an alliance with us, is that any justification for going to war? But I will tell you another thing. Lord Beaconsfield, in his speech on Saturday, put a new phase on the question. He said the north-western frontier of India was a sort of haphazard and not a scientific frontier, and that it would be necessary that we should take measures to have a scientific frontier between Afghan and India. Now, that scientific frontier meant cutting a slice off Afghanistan and handing it over to the territories of India. But is that honest? Are we going to war in order to make the ruler of an independent country consent to the scientific re-arrangement of his territory? Do you think it right in the eyes of God or man to hurl against Afghanistan the whole force of our British arms in India, in order to rob an independent ruler of a portion of his territory, so that our frontier might not continue a haphazard frontier. And when we have conquered Afghanistan—and that will be no easy matter, for the Afghans have arms and appliances of war which they had not in the war of fifty years ago, a war that cost £17,000,000; and if it cost that half a century ago, how much would a war cost now?

£40,000,000 or £50,000,000 at the least—if we conquered the country we could not hold it without keeping a force which would cost several millions a year. And who is to pay the money? India cannot. The Indian Government put income tax on people who only receive 4s. a week wages. How can India pay? We cannot get the money out of the wretched, impoverished, famine-stricken people of India, and we shall have to pay. The weavers of Bolton will have to pay their share if we enter into that wicked war to rectify the frontiers of north-western India. It might be this war would be like “the letting out of the waters,” and might lead to a conflagration which would extend far beyond the bounds of India. It might afford the opportunity to those semi-independent Princes of India. It might happen that those feudatories might take the opportunity of striking against British supremacy; it is quite possible that, with the pressure of taxes in India creating a far greater injury than the approach of Russia through Afghanistan, it might be that through the uprising of those feudatories at a time when we were involved in a war with Afghanistan, reaching on to Russia and Europe, that that uprising might throw off the control of Great Britain, and that the imperial policy of bedecking the Queen with the title of Empress of India, might in the end lose India to the British Crown. We could not gain by that policy, and might lose frightfully by it. The people of this country have been carried away one step after another. We have seen one of the safeguards of British principles robbed by the removal of Indian troops; we have seen the Government who controlled those forces bringing them to Europe and increasing, practically, the army of this country, without, in the first instance, asking Parliament to vote the number of men or provide for their payment. Parliament has been degraded into the position of accepting the decisions of the Executive Government, and of providing means for squeezing out taxes from the pockets of the people to support that policy. I believe the entire country is indebted to Mr. Henry Dunckley, for the letters of “*Verax*” have brought before the minds of the country considerations of the utmost importance, and which ought to be well weighed in view of another General Election; because I believe that upon the General Election, when it comes—as come it soon must—will depend some most serious issues for the future of the country. The verdict will have to be pronounced by the people of the country upon the policy of the Government, and they will have to say whether they will give a verdict of approval or disapproval of that policy. I appeal to you as Christian men against a Government which has sought to impose Mahomedan tyranny over the Christian population of Greece. I appeal to you as lovers of freedom against a Government which has sought to destroy the budding liberties of struggling nations. I appeal to you in the name of patriotism against a Government which by excessive taxation and disturbance of commerce is adding to the gloom and privation which are unfortunately now afflicting multitudes of our fellow countrymen. I appeal to you in the name of your cherished public liberties against a Government which would rob you of the noble heritage of freedom handed down by your forefathers, and would substitute the personal rule of the Crown for a free and independent Parliament, controlled by the popular voice of the British people.

No. VII.

ANNUAL ADDRESS TO CONSTITUENTS.

Delivered at Burnley, November 18th, 1878.

Mr. Mayor and Gentlemen,—During the Gladstone Administration, the duty of a Liberal member of Parliament in giving an account of his stewardship at the close of each session was a most agreeable duty, because he could speak of beneficent legislation; he could tell his constituents of administrative reform; he could state how far economy in the public finances had been secured, and what reductions of taxations had been accomplished, and he could congratulate his constituency upon the general and increasing prosperity of the country. But, gentlemen, all that is changed now. I have no such report to make about the proceedings of the past session, and have no such expectations to offer you of future prosperity and happiness. The old Liberal banner, gentlemen, of "Peace, Retrenchment, and Reform" has been furled up and laid aside in the lumber room of State. There is no retrenchment. In the place of retrenchment there is an extravagant waste of national resources. In the place of reform there is a perpetuation of abuse and an increase of jobbery, and so far from there being peace we are kept continually in a state of alarm in the expectation of war. And, gentlemen, so far from my being able to look forward with any satisfaction to the future, I am bound to tell you that my anticipations are of the most gloomy character. Why, gentlemen, at this present moment the Government seem to be drifting into war—no, not drifting into war, but rushing into war—a war which I believe if it takes place will be a national crime—it will be a national danger, and will be an infamy in the history of our country. Gentlemen, when I thought of preparing this address to you there were many subjects which crowded upon my attention and which I should like to bring under your notice, but I felt that this question—this very serious question—of the circumstances under which the nation is placed by Her Majesty's Government, is one that I am bound to deal with in the first instance because I feel that there is not a man in this room whose interests, whose future welfare, the interests of whose family may not be compromised by what is going on at the present time in the Councils of Her Majesty's Government. And, therefore, I venture in the first instance, and as the most important part of the duty that I owe my constituents, to protest in your voice and in your name against the Government dragging the nation into a war which would be wicked in its purpose, infamous in its object, and which might involve this country in dreadful danger. Gentlemen, let me say that this war, if war does take place, will be declared under the prerogative of the Crown, under the advice of the Ministers of the State, and the people's representatives will have no voice and no consultation on the question. This step may be taken—a step of such serious consequences to every son of toil in this country, and of such solemn import to the future of this nation—this step may be taken, and you and your representatives may never be

consulted in the slightest degree upon it. They say that that is constitutional. If it be constitutional, then I say the constitution ought to be changed. Bear in mind, gentlemen, that this is no emergency. It is no new emergency that has arisen in an unexpected manner. During the last two years the Government has been adopting a policy leading up to a war with Afghanistan, and they have intentionally concealed that policy from Parliament. Gentlemen, members of the Government when they have been questioned as to their policy with regard to Afghanistan, as is their custom, have given in reply to those questions misleading answers calculated to deceive, and they have kept back important papers which they have actually promised to lay upon the table of the House, and which have not been laid upon the table of the House up to the present moment. It is clearly shown that when Lord Lytton was sent out to India in 1876 it was decided that he should adopt a policy—a new policy—in connection with the North-Western frontier of India, a policy which was entirely opposed to the course taken by former Viceroy of India, and entirely contrary to the highest civil and military authorities. Gentlemen, I hope that the importance of the question which I am now bringing under your notice, and the absolute necessity of full information being given upon it, will justify me in going for some little time into details upon this matter, which otherwise I should not have troubled you with. But I may mention to you that a short time after Lord Lytton undertook the Government of India he took possession of a place called Quettah. Now Quettah is a fortified place just on the borders of Afghanistan, and the placing of British troops in this town of Quettah had a certain meaning. Well now, what do you think that meaning was? I can tell you in the words of Lord Lawrence, one of the greatest generals and greatest statesmen who were ever connected with Indian policy. Lord Lawrence says that if the occupation of Quettah has any meaning at all it is a preliminary to the occupation of Candahar and Herat; and that it is in fact a threat of the invasion of Afghanistan and the subjugation of the country. Following the occupation of Quettah, Lord Lytton sent Sir Lewis Pelly to confer with the envoy of the Ameer of Afghanistan about certain demands which the British Government made upon the Ameer. Sir Lewis Pelly met the Afghan envoy and came away without anything being done. We naturally asked what did Sir Lewis ask the Afghans to agree to at that time? We have a right to know it. He was an envoy of the Indian Government, and we asked the English Government to tell us what Sir Lewis Pelly demanded. If he demanded what was right we will back him up; if he demanded what was wrong are you going to drive us to war for something we cannot justify in the name of England? We have a right to know what he demanded in the name of the Indian Government. Gentlemen, the Government said they would place the papers in reference to this matter on the table of the House months ago; and now, in accordance with their usual policy of mystery and suspicion they have kept back those papers, and we do not know at the present moment what Sir Lewis Pelly demanded from the Ameer, although we have reason to believe that the demands which he made were of the most unreasonable and unjust character, and of a character which any

independent potentate would be sure to reject. Well, now, gentlemen, at the time of this mission of Sir Lewis Pelly in 1877, there were rumours in this country to the effect that the Government were adopting a new policy with regard to the North Western frontier of India, and that they were intending to adopt military measures in regard to Afghanistan; and in consequence of these rumours the Duke of Argyll in June of last year asked Lord Salisbury in the House of Lords whether these rumours were true. Now I want you to pay attention to Lord Salisbury's reply. Lord Salisbury said there was no truth in these rumours. He declared that "our relations with the Ameer of Cabul have undergone no material change since last year," and he closed his speech by saying, "There is no reason for any apprehension of any change of policy, or any disturbance of our Indian Empire." That was a misleading statement made by Lord Salisbury last year. There was a question asked Sir Stafford Northcote to the same effect, and I just wish you to notice what the leader of the House of Commons said in the course of a debate upon this subject. He said, referring to his former speeches in the House of Commons as to the Afghan frontier, that his opinions were not altered, "on the general lines of policy which I have always considered ought to be followed, and which I believe the Government are fully determined to follow in the matter of our Indian policy." Then he went on to refer to two schools—the school which advocated a forward policy, and the opposite school, which is rather for keeping back, and not for advancing beyond, our frontier. Sir Stafford Northcote said, "I have myself always leant to the second of these policies,"—that is to say, not advancing on the frontier—"I have always demurred to the idea, which is held by some, that the best way to meet danger is to advance beyond our frontier, and have always held that the true lines are to strengthen ourselves within our frontier, and to do so by a combination of measures, moral and material." Now, the statement of Sir Stafford Northcote was directly in the teeth of what we now know to be the fact. We now know that the Government had inaugurated a policy, and were carrying out a policy in accordance with the wishes of what Sir Stafford Northcote called the "school in favour of a forward policy." Now the Chancellor of the Exchequer is in this dilemma, did he know that that was the policy of the Government or did he not? If he knew he told what was false in the House of Commons, in the hearing of the representatives of the people, and before the country. If he did not know, then it is only another proof of what is being constantly shown, that a number of these mediocrities of the Government are played like pawns upon the chess-board of imperial policy by the arch-magician at the head of the Government. Under this screen of mystery and deception the forward movement towards the north-west frontier of India went on. That forward movement has always been a policy that the servants of the Crown in India, both civil and military, have favoured, and I will tell you why. It is because they like to grasp at new territory in order that they may seize the loot. They want new appointments; they want greater salaries; they want promotion; and in order to gratify the military greed of a number of officers in the army,

and the avarice of a number of civil servants of the Crown, you are to be trapped into a war which will disgrace you, and the result of which will only be disaster and distress. Well now, gentlemen, following this policy, our Indian Government sent a mission, the result of which you have heard, to the Ameer of Afghanistan. They then sent Sir Neville Chamberlain with a small army, not an ordinary escort, who demanded by letters from the Governor-General—letters written in such an imperious style that they were certainly very offensive—he demanded, I say, that he should be admitted to the presence of the Ameer of Afghanistan, in order that he might state the demands of England. Of course he was refused; he was certain to be refused. My impression is that the Government intended he should be refused in order that they might pick a quarrel with this potentate. After this refusal of the Ameer of Afghanistan to receive our envoy the most unscrupulous statements were sent forth under the authority of persons connected with the Government—statements which would have been worthy of the French Empire in its worst days—in order to induce the people of this country to rise in indignation against the Afghan ruler, and clamour for war. We were told by Government prints, or at least by prints which get their information from Government sources, that our envoy had been grossly insulted, and had actually been threatened to be shot. Well, that went through the country, and a number of people, I dare say, thought that British blood was not going to stand that sort of thing. But it all proved to be a falsehood, and the truth is that the envoy was civilly treated, that there were no threats, and that there was nothing that could be objected to. Then the next thing was that the Ameer had refused to receive a British resident at Cabul, and that was an insult. That is to say, because this independent sovereign refused to receive a British envoy to reside at Cabul, we must go to war to make him, in order to encourage friendly feelings between him and us. But the fact is, gentlemen, and this must be remembered, the most eminent of the Viceroy of India during the last thirty years have been of opinion that it was not desirable to have a British envoy at the Court of Cabul, and yet the mission was sent out. Viceroys have always thought it better to have a native Indian to represent them, and to give information to the Indian Government of what was going on in Afghanistan, and the reason was that it was almost certain that any British envoy in the country would be murdered when there was a state of public commotion, or, if we chose to call it such, a feeling of barbarian jealousy, and then we should have to go to war to punish the country for that. The late Lord Mayo, feeling that it was not necessary to have a British representative there, and yielding to the wishes of the late Ameer, was strongly of opinion that it was essential in order to keep up a good feeling between the Indian Government and Afghanistan, that we should not have an envoy at Cabul. The Ameer is only doing now what he has done for years past, and what his predecessors have done, and yet we are told that that was an insult to England, and, therefore, we must go to war. Gentlemen, the Afghans know perfectly well what is the meaning of our sending English envoys to Cabul. Whenever a British Government takes its first steps to get control over a country, it sends to

them British residents, and then there is no doubt whatever that some circumstance occurs which justifies England's interference, and it ends, as it has done in other cases, in the annexation of the territory to England's possessions. Well, the Afghans know that perfectly well, and therefore they resist the first step against their independence, and although they may be an altogether barbarous country they have a right in the eye of God to that independence which has been granted to them, and any country which seeks to rob them of that independence may very fairly be opposed by every means in their power in order to retain what they believe to be one of the greatest blessings of their social life. We have heard all these excuses for our quarrel with Afghanistan, and now they have all dropped, and my Lord Beaconsfield, in his speech at the Mansion House, comes forward, and in the sight of Europe, and in the eyes of the world, lets the real cat out of the bag. And what is the reason for this picking of a quarrel? Well, I will tell you. I will tell you in Lord Beaconsfield's own words. He says that the frontier between our dominions and the Afghan dominions "is a haphazard and not a scientific frontier, and, therefore, as this frontier dividing the two countries is a haphazard and not a scientific frontier," we have a right, in order to make it a more scientific frontier, and in order to make it a less haphazard frontier, not to give the Afghans a slice out of our frontier, but to take a slice out of theirs. Gentlemen, I venture to say that within the memory of any man in this room, there has never been such an immoral announcement of policy expressed by any Prime Minister of England as that immoral statement of the Prime Minister at the Mansion House. It means, as I have said, a most unjust demand from the Afghan ruler of a part of his territory. What right have we to take any territory from him? What right have we to declare that we demand this? What should we say of any other power guilty of such a thing? We should denounce them in the strongest words the English language would admit of. But I have seen in the *Times* newspaper in the letters of Sir James Stephen, some attempt to excuse this violation of a great moral principle, because they say we are dealing with a barbarous people whom we are bound to keep in subjection, and because this rectification of frontier is necessary for the happiness and protection of our subjects in India. Gentlemen, I believe there is a morality in politics as well as in anything else; and if a man is guilty of immorality in politics, he certainly is not taking a wise and prudent course. Supposing a man who had been picking pockets in the streets, was brought up before my friend his worship the Mayor, and he made this defence; "Well, Mr. Mayor, I found in this man's pocket the sum of 16s. 10³d., a most unscientific and haphazard sum. You must bear in mind, Mr. Mayor, that this man is an ignorant man and a drinking man. The probability is that if he had been allowed to keep possession of this haphazard sum he had in his pocket, he would have gone into the publichouse and spent a lot of it, and he would have come out drunk and done some damage, or perhaps he might have injured someone; and therefore I am a public benefactor by settling the matter in a scientific way." Lord Beaconsfield attempted to justify his statement of the evils arising out of this unscientific frontier by the assertion that,

for some time, various viceroys and different administrations have had this question of frontier occupying their attention. Now, gentlemen, Lord Beaconsfield's Mansion House speeches are always full of mis-statements and misrepresentations, and this Mansion House speech is no exception to the rule. I venture to say that what he implies, in the statement which I have made, is perfectly false. And now I will show why it is false. Of course he implies that these viceroys have had their attention drawn to the inconvenience of this frontier, and have wished a change in the frontier in the direction he is proposing to secure one. Now, it so happens that we know the opinions of these viceroys. I will begin with Lord Canning. In the *Times* newspaper, the other day, appeared a letter from Mr. Lane, who was associated with Lord Canning, in the Government of India, in which the writer says distinctly, that Lord Canning was opposed to any such proceeding as that of interfering with the frontier of Afghanistan. Lord Mayo was also opposed to any such proceeding; and as to Lord Lawrence—who was the great saviour of India at the time of the mutiny—you have read his letters in the newspapers, and you know that he has denounced the policy of the Government as being altogether a wicked and foolish policy. Then there only remains another viceroy who has recently held power in India, and that is Lord Northbrook, who made a splendid speech the other day directly in the teeth of Lord Beaconsfield's assertion, denouncing the policy of the Government, and maintaining we should not interfere with the policy of India. Gentlemen, the thing is not true. These viceroys did not support the policy which the Government are now carrying on; and I challenge any Conservative supporter of Lord Beaconsfield to bring forward any evidence whatever to show that he was, in the slightest degree, justified in bringing in the names of viceroys who were as much opposed to the policy as I am. But we have heard a great deal lately about treaties—the sanctity of treaties. Well, we are bound under treaty with Afghanistan to respect the territories of the ruler of that country. We are bound, under a treaty of 1835, to respect the territories of the Ameer and his successors. Has that to go for nothing? I daresay it will go for nothing. I know that these men in the Government, while they talk about the treaties as against Russia, are prepared to break any of their own engagements and treaties—and I don't think they will act upon this one. But, when the Queen took possession of India, at the time of the dissolution of the East India Company, in 1855, she issued a solemn proclamation; and in that proclamation said—"We desire no extension of our territorial possessions, and while we will permit no aggressions upon our dominions or our rights to be attempted with impunity, we shall sanction no encroachment upon those of others. We shall respect the rights, dignity, and honour of native princes, as our own;" so that, if the war goes on to change this unscientific frontier, it will break this solemnly pledged word of the Queen, and it will tear up treaties to which we are parties; and I believe, whatever the result of that war may be, it will most certainly lead to incalculable loss to this country. Don't suppose that if we do conquer Afghan it will be an easy matter. It is a most difficult country—a country with high mountains and rugged districts, in

which military operations will be carried on with the greatest difficulty. It is a country inhabited by a wild, fierce race, determined to maintain their independence, and determined to sacrifice everything to secure it ; men who are used from childhood to the use of arms. We have had the experiences of a war with Afghanistan before, and if that war cost £17,000,000, what will one cost at the present time? One writer in the *Times* acknowledges that, under the new conditions of modern warfare, the cost will be immensely greater, and it will involve a frightful cost in treasure and lives. Who is to pay, gentlemen, this, perhaps, £30,000,000 or £40,000,000 of money that may be necessary in order to subjugate this country and reduce it so as to allow its property to be taken from it in a complimentary and pleasant fashion? Gentlemen, India cannot pay this money. Don't suppose you can lay this tax upon India. India has a poverty-stricken, and, I am afraid, in many districts, a famine-stricken population. The taxation of India is growing more oppressive, and last year, when it was proposed to lay an additional sum of a million and a half, there was an income tax imposed upon earnings as low as 4s. a week. There was an addition to the taxation upon salt, which is an absolute necessity of life, of forty per cent. Now, gentlemen, I say we cannot raise this money from India ; they will have to come to you to pay the money. There is no doubt about it, that the British taxpayer will have to pay this money, and they are already telling you that it is part of the Imperial policy, not for India alone, but in the interests of Great Britain, and therefore you must pay for it. But, gentlemen, every military authority of the greatest eminence has come to this conclusion, that after we have conquered the Ameer (because it is expected that we shall conquer him), our greatest difficulties will begin ; and in order to hold down by military power the country of these fierce people, struggling for independence, Lord Sandhurst calculated it would cost us at least from three millions to four millions a year. Who is to pay that? India cannot do it. Where is the money to come from, gentlemen? Why, many of you cotton operatives are interested in getting the repeal of the import duties of cottons imported into India. You know that interferes with the success of the cotton trade in Burnley. I have, as your representative, done what little I could in support of that view. I have always said this : "You cannot get rid of these import duties on the cotton goods until you get rid of the extravagant and wasteful expenditure in India." There is no more hope of the repeal of the import duties on cotton goods while they go on with this expenditure, than there is of dividing the moon amongst you in so many pieces. This question of taxation in India is most important, because I do not hesitate to say that the highest authorities with regard to India are of opinion that the greatest danger to our Empire is not from Russian invasion, but from the discontent of the people, occasioned by financial exertions, and if this discontent goes on, remember we are a mere handful of British men and soldiers controlling above 200,000,000 of the human race, and the best way to continue our sway is to govern them well and wisely, and to develop their industry and prosperity, and then we may hope that, as English rule is advantageous to them, they will not readily be induced to throw it off. I hope you have not considered that I have

trespassed too long upon your time in reference to this Afghan question. I have thought it right, under the solemn responsibility which I feel in addressing this great meeting, that that should take the first position in the remarks I had to offer, because it was the most pressing matter upon which public opinion ought to be brought to bear. But, I have no doubt, gentlemen, I shall be told, perhaps in this town, perhaps in this country or elsewhere, that we have no right to criticise the proceedings of the Government until the matter is settled; that we ought to remember we are ignorant of all the facts of the case, and that we ought to have confidence in the Government. Well now, gentlemen, in his speech at the Mansion House, Lord Beaconsfield made a remark, which probably if he had heard what I have had to say he would have applied to myself. He said, "The Government of the world is carried on by sovereigns and statesmen, not by anonymous paragraphists, or the hair-brained chatter of irresponsible frivolity." You see my Lord Beaconsfield is above public opinion. He disdains public criticism. It is not for us, gentlemen, to penetrate into the mysterious arcana of State necromancy, nor can we approach those serene altitudes from whence Lord Beaconsfield looks down upon our ignorant incapacity; and, like an Olympian Jove, wields the power of England and controls the destinies of Europe. Well, it is perfectly true, gentlemen, that in some parts of the world the government is in the hands of sovereigns and statesmen. It was so under the French empire, it is so in Russia, it is so in Turkey, but Lord Beaconsfield entirely mistakes the genius of the British nation if he supposes that he can blot and blur over our free institutions by the teachings of an effete despotism. Lord Beaconsfield forgets that he is the creature of the House of Commons, no less than the servant of a constitutional Monarchy, and he seems to fancy that he is in reality what he is in feeling and sympathy—the Grand Vizier of an Oriental despot. Gentlemen, we talk about the inconsistency of Lord Beaconsfield, and, if I had time, if it were worth while, I could have shown you in reference to this very Afghan question, that in 1842 Lord Beaconsfield took exactly the line we are now advocating. While I admit there is inconsistency in Lord Beaconsfield in this way, that he is prepared to be at any time inconsistent to serve his own purposes, yet there is no inconsistency in regard to those ideas of his in favour of personal rule, and in his expressing contempt for the public representative assembly of England. You will find those ideas in the novels that he wrote thirty or forty years ago, and which were then, I have no doubt, considered to be "the hair-brained chatter" of a young and fashionable novelist—but which are now the opinions of the most powerful Prime Minister of England. What are those opinions? Those opinions are that the personal rule of the Crown should be advanced as far as possible, that the rights and power of the hereditary branch of the Legislature should be elevated as far as possible, and that the authority and privileges of the people's House of Representatives should be degraded as low as possible. That is the guage of battle that my Lord Beaconsfield has thrown down, and we, as the representatives of the people, have to take that guage up, and unless I am very much mistaken, I believe that as the result of the series of struggles—which is now commencing, and which is increasing in

intensity every day—we shall drive from Power a Prime Minister who, during the last five years, has fouled the stream of British policy, who has ignored the rights of Parliament, who has set up the old unused prerogatives of the Crown, and who by his policy has deepened the commercial gloom of this country, and added to the distress and privations under which multitudes of our fellow-countrymen are suffering. Gentlemen, we must remember these three things are closely connected—Imperial and spirited foreign policy, heavy expenditure and bad trade. It has been a common saying that whenever the Tories are in power we have bad trade. Our present experience justifies that statement; and will you allow me to say that although not present amongst you, I have not been an unmoved witness of the sufferings and of the distress of this great industrial centre. I have sympathised deeply with all classes during the last few months. I knew how capital was suffering, I knew how labour was suffering, and I felt how powerless we all were to alleviate or remove the suffering. The evils extended all over the kingdom in every great branch of industry. The same depression that exists in the cotton trade exists also in the coal trade, in the silk trade, and in the woollen trade; in fact in every great branch of business we have the same great pressure and great distress. But in the Mansion House speech Lord Beaconsfield, who was ascending so high into these grand grounds of British foreign policy, had not a word to say about the distress of the great body of the British nation. I remember a year or two ago in the Mansion House speech, Lord Beaconsfield said his Government had produced contentment amongst all classes. Why did he not say so on Saturday week? He forgets when he talks about British interests, that the greatest British interest is that the great body of the people of this country should be well fed, well housed, and amply employed, and the country should be progressing in happiness and prosperity. Gentlemen, Tory Governments never did anything to lighten the springs of industry; they always added additional weight upon them. They spend more money amongst the Army, Navy, and Civil Services, and then they give sops to landowners by relieving local rates, adding to the taxation of the country; but every million of taxation is an additional pressure bearing down your industry either directly or indirectly. I will not dwell, because time is going, on the past and present expenditure of the Government, but when I tell you that the Chancellor of the Exchequer is spending nearly £90,000,000 a year, it is almost incredible that the British nation should allow such a Government to exist, when they know it is taking from the country in a time of peace so large a portion of its wealth. Gentlemen, we had great difficulty in dealing with the expenditure of the Government last year. Like everything else they do, it is a thimble-rigging kind of Government; you cannot tell where the pea is. The Chancellor of the Exchequer came down to the House with a most unusual arrangement; he divided his budget in an unusual manner into ordinary and extraordinary items. Then we had supplementary estimates, part of which were spent and part not. Then we had other estimates, and so it went on until it was utterly impossible to tell what the Government were spending. We found this however, that the expenditure was always

rising by a sort of crescendo scale ; now it has got to 89½ millions, and I believe before the end of the financial year it will be got to over £90,000,000, and what they will involve us in further we cannot say. Not only did they mislead us by the mode in which they brought the question of expenditure before the country, but they did worse than this, for in regard to one important item the Government turned into an absolute farce, a constitutional principle—I allude to the employment of Indian troops in Europe. The Indian troops were brought into Europe without a vote of the House of Commons, and under the prerogative of the Queen. Our forefathers, when they brought over William the Third, after the revolution of 1688, received the king, but before they allowed him to take the Throne of England there was an understanding that he should acknowledge what they laid before him as the “Bill of Rights.” Our noble forefathers in electing a sovereign, maintained the inalienable rights of a free people, and amongst the claims they laid before the king, they said that the raising and the keeping of a standing army within the kingdom in the time of peace, unless it be by the consent of Parliament, is against law. What is the consequence of that arrangement under the Bill of Rights? Every year in the House of Commons, early in the session, we have to vote the number of men that it shall be legal for the Government to keep as soldiers under the Crown. Anybody can move that the number be altered. After we have settled the number we have to vote their pay in a committee of the whole House, and having voted their pay the vote is reported to the House of Commons. Upon that we can raise another debate, and it is then put into the Mutiny Bill. Upon that we can raise the constitutional question, and after that it is put into the Appropriation Bill, when the matter can be again debated. All these constitutional checks and safeguards have all been made null and void by this despotic Government using the old prerogative of the Crown to bring their 10,000 troops from India to Europe without the representatives of the people having a voice in the matter. The time was before the days of the Stuarts when the king had to pay, under the feudal system, for the maintenance of the standing army. It is not so now ; you have to pay. Every one here will have to pay his share of the expenditure of these 10,000 Indian troops, and yet the House of Commons was never consulted as to bringing them, and the House was treated as though it had no right whatever to express any opinion before the thing was done and finished so that we could not change or alter it. It is not only this extravagant expenditure which is pressing upon your labour, but it is the alarm and the apprehensions which this Government is exciting in relation to foreign affairs. I can tell you, being largely engaged in manufacturing operations myself, that it operates in all parts of the world, and interferes with the demand for British goods. Lord Derby truly said, “The greatest of British interests is peace,” but this Government have been the great disturbers of the public peace ; they have, in fact, continually during the last few months brought this country almost to the verge of war. Even at the conclusion of the Russo-Turkish war the Government again stood in the way of European concert, and you recollect when it was proposed that there should be a

congress of the European Powers, our Government made a difficulty which none of the other Governments made, and they said that the Russian Government must submit to certain terms none of the other Governments thought fit to impose, and by threats and "bully," by the movement of their 10,000 Indian troops and the vote of credit, got this country and Europe into such a state of ferment that at one time it seemed as if we were upon the verge of going to war with Russia upon a point which no other country thought necessary. Lord Beaconsfield said that the British plenipotentiaries were to go into the conference in order to maintain the rights of treaties and the public law of Europe, and he said in the House of Lords that it was an essential principle of the law of nations that no Power can liberate itself from the engagements of a treaty, nor modify the stipulations thereof unless with the consent of the contracting parties, and Lord Beaconsfield then exclaimed, "That is the key-note of our policy; that is the diapason of our diplomacy." Gentlemen, diapason means the most perfect harmony of sweet sounds, and is certainly an inappropriate word to use in regard to diplomacy which has kept Europe in a state of ferment and hot water. But this Government, at the time they were making these professions of maintaining the laws of nations and that no nation should withdraw itself from treaty obligations, were entering into a secret agreement with Russia unknown to other powers—an agreement on their own hook stipulating certain conditions of withdrawal from the obligations of a treaty. And, just in passing, let me say that in the secret convention with Russia the great point was not to prevent Russia from enjoying the conquests she had secured, because all her most important conquests were secured in the secret arrangements, but the object was to limit as far as possible the freedom given to the subject races of Turkey. But when our Government talk about recognising the rights of treaties, what have they to say about sending our fleet into the Dardanelles, contrary to the provisions of the treaty? Then they brought the Indian troops into Europe, as there is abundant evidence to show, upon a filibustering expedition. Lord Derby, in the House of Lords on the 28th of July, as a reason for his resignation, said his resignation was on account of the decision taken three months before, to secure a naval station on the Eastern side of the Mediterranean, and that for this purpose it was necessary to seize upon and occupy the Isle of Cyprus with a point of land on the Syrian coast, and this was to be done by a force sent out on what I may fairly call a filibustering or piratical expedition. This statement was denied by Lord Salisbury and other members of the Government: in fact, Lord Derby had the lie direct given to him in the House of Lords. Now, gentlemen, I will tell you why I believe Lord Derby, and why I do not believe Lord Salisbury and the other members of the Government. I do not believe them, because in statements which have been made by them during the last session of Parliament, it has been proved to demonstration that they do not stick to the truth. Did you not hear at the beginning of the session—it was well known afterwards, but suspected then—that there were dissensions in the Cabinet—dissensions in consequence of Lord Derby and Lord Carnarvon differing with their colleagues, and did not

we hear from Lord Beaconsfield and from Lord Salisbury, in the House of Lords, that there were no differences in the Cabinet? Is that true? When they sent the fleet to the Dardanelles as a menace against Russia, what did they say in the House of Commons and in the House of Lords was the reason? They said they had sent it to protect British lives and property at Constantinople. There was another case. Parliament separated last Easter, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer said, within my hearing in the House of Commons, that there were no new circumstances in the situation of affairs connected with the Eastern question, and therefore Parliament might separate without any difficulty; and yet, at that very moment, the Indian troops had been ordered to Malta. A most important step was taken, and was not only concealed from Parliament, but it was concealed by a suppression of truth; and in the House of Commons, I charged Sir Stafford Northcote with having suppressed the truth. I said he sent us away to our homes under an impression which was afterwards proved to be absolutely false. Gentlemen, some little time afterwards, at the time of the Congress of Berlin, just before it met, you recollect a most remarkable circumstance occurred. A copy of the secret convention between Russia and England, to which I have alluded, appeared in the *Globe* newspaper. The Government were asked in the House of Lords whether it was a genuine paper or not. They denied it; but it proved afterwards that it was quite correct. How can I say I believe men who so prostitute the honourable and upright character of British statesmen as to come down to Parliament, and, time after time, make statements the only effect of which is misleading to Parliament and the country at large. Gentlemen, I protest altogether against that policy and practice. It is a new policy and practice manufactured by her Majesty's Government. Well, the Berlin Congress took place; and Lord Beaconsfield now wishes to make it appear that it was held in the interests of Turkey, and said Turkey had been benefited by the treaty, by which she had got rid of many rebellious subjects—obtained a more intelligible frontier (but I must say it is brought nearer to Constantinople)—and which has also secured the independence of the ruler of Turkey. Of course, gentlemen, it is all very well for Lord Beaconsfield to try to make it appear that Turkey has not in any way been interfered with by the Berlin Congress, because you know that he has all through backed up the independence and integrity of the Turkish Empire, and now, when it has been certainly carved a good deal, he tries to get out of it by adopting a peculiar phraseology;—he says there has not been any partition—only a redistribution of territory. And in regard to this question of partition, Lord Beaconsfield protested against it, British honour would never allow that there should be a partition of Turkey, and he made this astounding statement in the House of Lords: he said, “Her Majesty's Government have at all times resisted the partition of Turkey. These professors of partition have spoken freely to us on the subject. We have been taken up into a high mountain and shown all the kingdoms of the earth, and they have said ‘All these shall be yours if you will worship partition.’” But Lord Beaconsfield sat upon this mountain of temptation, and resisted, actuated, as he says, by

the high moral considerations that are mixed up with the subject. He resisted these flattering offers, and he came down from this high mountain—and he filched Cyprus. Gentlemen, this is very much as though some highly respectable townsman, who made great professions of being far above the allurements of earthly dross, so magnanimous and benevolent that nothing could induce him to take the slightest advantage of his neighbours, and having obtained this high character, and having made great professions, was brought up before the mayor for picking pockets. Well now, gentlemen, that is about the morality of Lord Beaconsfield. There is no doubt that Turkey was partitioned, and Lord Beaconsfield did choose, I think very unwisely, to take Cyprus. I think he had better have accepted something more valuable to this country. In connection with Cyprus we come to the most dangerous undertaking made by the Secret Convention which was entered into between England and Turkey, by which we pledged the honour and power of this country to maintain the rule of Turkey over the Asiatic provinces. Gentlemen, I cannot enter into the matter of this great responsibility fully, for it is a country with many millions of inhabitants, spread over a large extent of territory, and under a system of the worst possible government and injustice. Have we to take upon ourselves the responsibility of maintaining this dead and decayed despotism? Are we to subject ourselves and our successors to all the burdens that that responsibility may impose? But we, the representatives of England, have had nothing to do with this matter. This secret treaty was made under the prerogative of the Crown, and under that treaty we have had fastened upon our shoulders this heavy weight of responsibility. That is also constitutional, I suppose! Well, gentlemen, during the last session I moved a resolution in the House of Commons condemning these “constitutional” practices. I affirmed that there should be no treaty involving any obligation upon us, or upon our successors, finally ratified without the representatives of the people in Parliament having an opportunity of saying “aye” or “no” to it. Gentlemen, I hope to bring forward that resolution again next session, and I believe that after the experiences that we have had of the way in which this Government has been pushing forward that treaty-making prerogative, that I shall receive some very important support from some of the most eminent leaders of the great Liberal party in the House of Commons. Gentlemen, I have occupied your time and I have not done what is usually the chief duty of a member of Parliament. I have not spoken of home legislation, and the reason is, there is nothing to speak about. The two great measures of the past session consist of one in which there was an attempt to raise the price of beef, and the other to give you more bishops. Gentlemen, fortunately with regard to the great measure which was brought forward as a bribe to the farmers, and the effect of which, as introduced by the Government, would have been to raise the price of food, we, on the Opposition side of the House, did, by considerable activity and perseverance, very much modify that measure, and now I do not think it will have the objectionable influence which it otherwise would have had. Gentlemen, there were some other measures of no great importance proposed by the Government, upon which I need not occupy your time, but I may say in regard to our sister

country of Ireland, the Government opposed every measure proposed from the Liberal benches, or by the Irish members, to extend the Irish municipal and borough franchise, by giving to Irishmen the same right of voting in Ireland as we Englishmen have in England. If an Irishman comes from Cork to live in England he will have a vote for a house of a particular value in Burnley, but when he goes back to Cork, and occupies a house of the same value as when living in Burnley, he could not have a vote for it. During the last session I have always voted in favour of retrenchment in expenditure and reduction in taxation. I have supported every measure calculated, in my judgment, to do justice to Ireland. I have, in my place in the House of Commons, denounced the war policy of the Government and the unconstitutional practices in which they are at present engaged. I hope my votes and speeches which you have witnessed may have been satisfactory to you ; but this I do say, gentlemen, with a clear conscience—in the course I have taken in Parliament I have been actuated by a sincere desire to promote, as far as I can, the happiness and the welfare of my constituents and the best interests of the kingdom at large.

No. VIII.

Speech delivered in the House of Commons on Monday, August 4th, 1879.

Mr. Rylands moved :—"That in view of the large and increasing expenditure for military purposes in South Africa, this House is of opinion that the colonies of the Cape of Good Hope and Natal ought to be required to contribute a due proportion of the military expenditure incurred in the interests of those colonies, and which cannot in justice be made a charge upon the British Exchequer." The hon. gentleman said : If hon. gentlemen were to take the trouble to refer to the proceedings in Parliament 28 years ago, they will find that the House of Commons were engaged in very much the same sort of discussions as those which are occupying our attention at the present moment. In 1851, the country was engaged in a protracted war at the Cape of Good Hope. It was the last of several wars in which we had been engaged, and in consequence of the great amount of expenditure and, also, in consequence of the great uneasiness produced in the country by the succession of wars, the House of Commons seriously considered a motion brought before it, having reference to the circumstances which then existed. I think I may truly say that at that time the opinion of the highest authorities in this House was entirely to the effect that the wars in South Africa had been for the most part of a very unjust character ; that they had been fomented by the colonists, and had arisen to a great extent from aggression made by the colonists upon the adjoining tribes, and at the same time there was a feeling very strongly expressed in this House that the expenditure, which was incurred in the interests of the South African colony, ought not to be borne by the taxpayers of this

country, but that the South African colonists themselves should provide the means for the protection of their own frontier and for the support of their own interests. Well, sir, this which happened 28 years ago, has again happened within our own recent experience. We have again wars in South Africa, wars which I hope, for the time, may be considered as happily concluded; but there is a very strong opinion on the part of many members of this House, and I think it is an opinion which is also entertained in the country, that the origin of these wars—I am speaking not merely of the Zulu war, but of the Transkei war as well—can hardly be justified, but that the wars might have been avoided, and that all the expenditure and all the anxiety which has arisen in consequence of these wars, might have been saved to the country. I observe from the report of the details in the House of Commons in 1851, that Sir William Molesworth, in a speech which he made on the subject, stated the opinion which our subsequent experience has proved to be correct, that so long as the country continued to pay for the maintenance of British forces in the colonies at the Cape of Good Hope, and so long as we led the colonists to look to this country to furnish the military forces to carry out the objects which the colonists had in view, we should continue to have wars, and each war would prove greater than its predecessor. That has been so, for every Caffre war has been more formidable than its predecessor, requiring more troops and costing more money. That we found in the experience which we have gained in the war we have just had in South Africa. The Transkei war, according to the estimate of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, has cost the country near £1,000,000—I think the exact figure is between £800,000 and £900,000—and we are now about to consider an additional vote of credit for the Zulu war, amounting to £3,000,000. Last year we passed a vote of credit for £1,500,000, on account of the same campaign. From the statements, in fact, which have been laid on the table of the House of Commons, we find that in respect of the Zulu and Transkei wars, we have already voted for extraordinary expenditure nearly £5,500,000. But I wish to point out that this sum by no means represents the whole expenditure which has been incurred for military purposes in South Africa. The right hon. gentleman, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, in a speech he made a short time ago, in laying on the table an estimate for the vote of credit, spoke of the entire expenditure, which he estimated as the net cost of the war, beyond the sums already provided in the army estimates, as being the amount which he proposed to raise by the vote of credit. Now, that sum already provided in the army estimates is a very large sum indeed. The amount which we pay under the ordinary votes of this House on account of the force which is now in South Africa is very large indeed, and the ordinary estimates must be added to the total amount of extraordinary expenditure which we are incurring in South Africa. I am not quite sure whether I notice some dissent on the part of the Secretary for War, but I should be very glad to be corrected. I am quite satisfied, however, that at the present moment the amount of the estimate which we have on the table of the House for the vote of credit, is simply a further expenditure which does not include the ordinary charges of the troops which are placed in the ordinary

estimates of the year. Now the right hon. gentleman, the Secretary for War, agrees with me. If I am right, it means that in addition to this large sum of £5,500,000, which is the amount of the extraordinary expenditure which has had to be met by this country during the last three or four years for the purposes of the Transkei and Zulu wars, we must place at least £1,000,000 more on account of the expenditure which appears in the army estimates. Well, if that be so, it comes to this, that on account of the Transkei and Zulu wars we have up to the present time expended the sum of six or seven millions for our military and naval forces. Well, that is the estimate if I take the estimate as it has been laid on the table by the Chancellor of the Exchequer. But, I am bound to say that I believe that the Government themselves are in some doubt as to whether these estimates may not be exceeded, judging from previous experience and from the experience gathered of the Abyssinian war, where estimates were laid on the table of the House, carefully prepared by the Government, something like in the first instance the amount which the Government are asking on account of the South African war. They asked first of all £3,000,000, and then £4,500,000, and gradually it amounted to £9,000,000. But, if we take the experience of former African wars, I think we shall have very good reason to believe that the expenditure will mount up to very much more than the Government are at the present moment expecting. I know that the Government intend to check this expenditure as far as they can, but in the former wars, in the war which was under discussion 28 years ago, I find that the war of 1846-47, cost £685,000 extraordinary expenditure, and that of 1853 cost £2,000,000 in extraordinary expenditure; and it was stated in the House by the Secretary of the Colonies of that day, that no one in this country had a definite idea how the money was spent, and it was also stated in one of the speeches which was made in the debate, that Sir H. Pottinger told Lord Gray "that it was impossible to convey an adequate idea of the confusion throughout in consequence of the unauthorised expenditure and the attendant peculations which prevailed during the war. Commissions of audit were utterly incapable of auditing or checking the accounts." He further stated that though he had offered the burghers liberal terms for serving in a force to protect their property, they had deserted and returned to their homes within a month. Rations were served out to them after their desertion, and at one time it appeared that the whole population was receiving rations, and that, by some mistake, women received four ounces more meat per day than men. I dare say the Chancellor of the Exchequer hopes that no abuses to that extent will prove to have existed in the Commissariat Department in the present war; but we must bear in mind that in South Africa we are placed in the midst of a population everyone of whom must have a direct interest in getting as much money out of us as he possibly can. There are the merchants at the Cape who are importing—the merchants who are dealing in various commodities a demand for which arises in connection with war. There are traders in every district, and burghers, who have something to sell, and these tradesmen all derive such a great advantage from the war, and have such an oppor-

tunity of charging an enormous sum, that I must say I am not very sanguine in supposing that the Government will find that their labours are very successful efficiently to check these accounts. We heard from my hon. friend a quotation from the *Times* newspaper, where it was said that some colonists in Natal said that war paid better than sugar. And that is only repeating what occurred twenty-eight years ago, for I find that in the debate on Sir Charles Adderley's motion for a committee of inquiry into South African affairs, Mr. Vernon Smith said "it was a notorious saying in the colony that the war would last as long as the expenditure went on, and would begin to end when the expenditure declined, or, as the phrase was, when the price for the hire of wagons fell." Well, sir, we have that repeated in reference to the late war. I observe in the *Daily News* correspondent's letter of 18th May that the transport and commissariat difficulties "at that time were causing increased anxiety, and the movement of the troops was delayed in consequence. It is said that many are holding back wagons and oxen with the view of forcing the Government to give them higher prices. The Committee are considering what would be fair to both parties. This is at present unknown. Two or three pounds a day is being given for the hire of a wagon and a pair of oxen. When it is known that 1,600 wagons are employed, and that this is quite inadequate, the cost and the difficulties will be realised." Well, sir, the fact is that during the continuance of the war there was plundering in every direction. Those burghers—those traders whose battle we were fighting,—so far from showing any great disposition to aid us, determined to take every advantage to obtain out of the British exchequer as much money as they possibly could. And the consequence has been that the war has been extremely popular at the Cape of Good Hope and throughout South Africa. I hold in my hand several extracts from Cape newspapers which will show how this spending of money actually made the war popular at the Cape. I observe in the *Cape Argus*, regarding the remarks of the meetings at the Cape, expressing confidence in Sir Bartle Frere, and endorsing his policy, the writer says: "None of the enthusiasts thought it expedient to inquire into the policy of Sir Bartle Frere, probably because the cost of the Zulu war will be paid for in English blood and out of taxes raised in the United Kingdom." Then another paper—the *Standard and Mail*—said: "We are glad that England has resolved on putting things right, whatever it may cost her in men and money." Well, the London *Daily News* made some very pertinent remarks. It published several special articles on the injustice that would arise if the English were called upon to pay for the cost of this war, which was carried on for the benefit of the colonies. Upon which the Cape *Times* replied to the London *Daily News* in these words: "The London *Daily News* says in truth that we are waging a war of policy, but that the policy is that of Sir Bartle Frere and the Cape colonists; and it not unreasonably complains at our having all the advantages and they all the cost. John Bull has to pay for the mistakes of the past, and though he will growl at having to pay, he has never yet shirked his duty. If everything were admitted that the *Daily News* asserts, then all the more grateful should we be to that statesman who, being sent here in England's

name to govern this land, has come forward nobly in defence of the colony." Then there was an account in the same paper as follows: "From the Boers' camp his Excellency's progress has been marked by the warmest outpourings of a people's gratitude, and Capetown, as it is her privilege and her place, will put the final seal on all that has been done, and at the meeting in the Commercial Exchange to-day it was decided that the demonstration should be worthy of the metropolis of this country." Now, I wish to point out to the House that all this rejoicing at the Cape took place at the time when the war itself was languishing, and when we in this country were in a state of anxiety and alarm. At this period it seemed as though the whole military operations were paralysed, mainly because of this want of commissariat arrangements, and to some extent on account of the greed of the colonists. At the very period when we were in this country feeling great interest and some despondency in relation to this war; at that time when we in this country were suffering from commercial depression; when the demand for our industries was declining, and when the revenue returns were also declining, and we had expectations of budget deficits—at that very time everything at the Cape was flourishing. We find that the colonists were actually bathing in the stream of gold that was sent from this country. They were all in a state of the greatest satisfaction and perfect enjoyment. Now, the people of this country, when they saw this contrast of opinion between the colonies and the mother country, were, no doubt, very much dissatisfied. The right hon. gentleman, the Secretary of the Colonies, must have seen in the papers recently abundant evidence to assure him that the people of this country were thus dissatisfied, and I can only say that I think it would be the greatest injustice if, in the face of what I have just referred to, their labour were to be taxed in order to gratify what I would call colonial rapacity. Well, the Government, I know, have already taken steps with a view to obtain from the Cape Government repayment of what they have to determine as a fair proportion of this expenditure. I quite recognise the course which the Government have taken in this matter. I am glad to bear testimony that for the last three or four years the Secretary of the colonies has not lost sight of this, and in one dispatch, dated June last, there is no doubt whatever that the right hon. gentleman has brought under the notice of Sir Bartle Frere in very strong terms what he thinks, and what he believes to be the only just arrangement for the people of this country. But I am bound to say that while I think we recognise the course the Government has taken, we ought, as a House of Commons, to strengthen the hands of the Government by expressing very strongly, as it is our duty to our constituents to do, our opinion that we have a claim upon the colonists in this connection. And we have great reason for our doing so, because of the difficulty in which the Government will be placed by the supineness of former Governments. The Cape Colonists have been told again and again that they would be required to pay for the outlay on their account. I have referred to several blue books in the library on that subject, and I find that so early as 1848, in the dispatches of the 21st of March and 21st of June, that Lord Grey declared to the colonists that it was not to

be expected that this country should in future bear the expenses incurred by maintaining a force to defend the colony, and that it was incumbent on the colonists to make a suitable provision for that purpose, and subsequently Lord John Russell said that the colony was mainly responsible for meeting that expenditure. That was in '48. Now, in 1867, Lord Carnarvon sent a despatch to Sir P. Wodehouse giving notice "that payment must be made for British troops at the same rate as paid by the Australian colonies—namely, £40 a head for every infantry soldier, and £70 for every artilleryman. In default of these payments, Her Majesty's Government will be at liberty to withdraw the troops from the colony either wholly or to such an extent as they may deem expedient." That of course was only part of the expense, which would no doubt have amounted to £80 a head for every infantry soldier. I think I am near the mark in saying that. In replying to that despatch of Lord Carnarvon, the House of Assembly passed resolutions which were communicated to the Home Government, and those resolutions set forth a number of reasons—not of any strength, but still they were reasons—which the Colonial Government thought fit to put forward. The Duke of Buckingham, who had succeeded Lord Carnarvon in 1867, wrote to Sir P. Wodehouse :—"You request me to observe that in the resolution of the House of Assembly, no attempt is made to dispute the right of the mother country to make the stipulations insisted on ; that the House simply pleads its regret that such a demand should be put forward ; its sense that the peculiar position of the country gives it some claim to consideration, and its conclusion that the colony is unable to pay the sum demanded for its military defence. I have to inform you in reply that Her Majesty's Government adhere to the general principles indicated in Lord Carnarvon's despatch, and to the propriety of requiring from the Colony of the Cape of Good Hope a substantial contribution towards the expenses of her Majesty's troops." On December 9th, 1869, there had been a change of the Home Government. Lord Granville was the Secretary of the Colonies, and Lord Granville wrote a despatch to Sir P. Wodehouse, in which he said—"Her Majesty's Government have come to the conclusion that British troops cannot be retained in the colony for colonial purposes, and should be gradually withdrawn." Upon that there was a memorial from the Cape Colonists, numerous signed, addressed to the noble lord, praying her Majesty that military protection might be continued to the Cape Colonists at the expense of Great Britain. Lord Granville, in replying in acknowledgement of that memorial, said—"I do not doubt that the effectual protection of life and property is essential to the protection of the colony. I observe, however, that the memorialists estimate the white population at 200,000, and the cost of defence at £100,000, which, if the whole were paid by persons of European origin, would only amount to 10s. per head, and declares this sum to be a strain on the finances of the colony greater than it can bear. But this is scarcely a good reason for the shifting all further expense upon the inhabitants of Great Britain ; who already pay 15s. per head for their own defences, independently [of police." Well, now, I think that was a very sound position for Lord Granville to take up, and upon that despatch there

was another address to the Queen from the House of Assembly, praying that the withdrawal of troops may be postponed. Then Lord Granville on May 28th, 1870, wrote—"It is impossible to hold out any hopes that her Majesty's Government will sanction any further delay in the removal of the troops beyond that which has been already determined upon, and I therefore earnestly hope that the Cape Parliament will address themselves seriously to the task of placing the finances on a proper footing, and making further provision for the defence of the colony." Now, sir, I think it is a matter of grave regret that, notwithstanding the position which her Majesty's Government took on this occasion, there should not have been steps taken in accordance with these despatches. There was a diminution of troops, but there was no such step taken as was contemplated in the despatches, and we still retained something like 3,000 men in the colony—3,000 men costing us at the rate of £100 per man—all the charges taken into account, and we were paying all that large expenditure for the protection of the colonies, while the Colonial Government were satisfied to pay to us the magnificent sum of £10,000 a year. That no doubt is a difficulty which the Government will meet with arising from what I must call the *laches* of former Governments. I think it is most unfortunate that former Governments did not follow up the decisions which were communicated to the Cape Colony, and I believe that if they had been determined to carry out the policy which they had announced, and if they had insisted upon payment by the colonists of the sum which they intimated that they should require them to pay; or if they had acted upon the alternative of withdrawing the troops, I have a firm opinion indeed that the colonists would have made ample arrangements for their own protection, and I have a very strong impression that the war which we are now unfortunately experiencing would never have happened. Well, I want to ask the Government what they intend to do in order to compel the colonists to pay what is due from them. Of course, they will be met as former Governments have been met—by all sorts of flimsy excuses. I am perfectly aware that they will be met by the statements of the colonists that they cannot pay. They will appeal to the Colonial Secretary that they cannot afford to pay. Well, I say, they can afford a great deal better than we can afford it. It so happens that the very last mail, or one of the last, brought us a Budget speech which was made by the Finance Minister in the Cape of Good Hope assembly. Now that is a very important speech, and I have no doubt the right hon. gentleman has noticed it in connection with this question. I quote the speech from the *Times* of one day last week—"The Budget speech which was delivered yesterday by the Treasurer-General (Mr. Miller) was a very satisfactory one. It shows an increasing revenue and a prosperous condition of the country. For the financial year 1878-79, just expired, the estimate, including the addition of amounts expected from the taxing measures passed last year, was £1,838,000, while the actual income will probably be about £2,067,888, giving an excess of £229,889. Duty from customs alone realised £709,387, being an excess of £152,387. The excise on brandy returned £50,000, and the house duty £80,000

The Government, after defraying all the ordinary expenditure, will, with their surplus, be able to meet all the war expenses without any increase of taxation or of the public debt." If our Chancellor of the Exchequer could produce such a budget he would be a very fortunate man—a much more fortunate man than he is at the present moment. Now I believe there is an omission here, because I believe that they had borrowed £760,000 in the course of the year 1878-79. The authorised debt now stands at ten millions and a half, including an annual charge of £472,491 for interest, and £88,884 for sinking fund towards its gradual extinction, making together £581,375—an amount exceeding what was the total public income of the colony ten years ago. Well, if this debt was a debt which had been incurred in some most wasteful way, if it had been thrown away by some extravagant body, it would no doubt be a very serious charge upon them, but in point of fact this debt is all for works of a character which are returning very good interest indeed. They are public works which produce a very large income. They say that "of the whole amount charged as public debt, £9,846,858 has been raised for reproductive works, chiefly extended and nearly completed lines of railways. Although only portions of these lines have as yet been opened up for traffic, the estimate of railway receipts for next year is about £600,000, and there is no doubt of its being realised. The telegraph system of the colony was also extended last year by the erection of 263 miles of new lines, bearing 421 miles of new wire. The war expenditure borne by the colony has been about a million and a quarter, including cost of the disturbances on the northern border of Basutoland. Up to the 30th of April, 1879, the actual payments reached a total of £1,087,361, and for May and June about £134,843, making a total on the 30th of June, of £1,222,704; including all advances and expenditure on account of those services, and deducting the amount of the war loan, £750,000, leaves a balance of £472,704, which has been met from general revenue." So that in point of fact they assume that their war expenditure for the 12 months of 1878-9, amounted to £1,200,000, which I believe is a very excessive estimate; and yet they say that the balance of expenditure over the loan, the balance amounting to £472,704, has been met out of the general revenue without increased taxation. Then he goes to the Budget for the coming year, and this Budget with regard to taxation is altogether most satisfactory. The Finance Minister says he believes the income for 1879-80, will be £2,309,000, while the expenditure he estimates at £2,226,164; and this he goes on to say includes what he calls the large sum of £217,151 for military expenses. That is the sum the Government has put down in its Budget for purposes of defence. That does not look as if the colony contemplated meeting the demands of the Government to any large extent; but I wish to point out to the Government that in this statement which shows how flourishing is the revenue of the colony, which shows no debt as a burden, because it has been incurred for productive works which produce a large income, and this statement which shows a light taxation, an increasing trade, and extension of resources at the Cape; with all this before us, any pretence that the colony is not in a position to meet the just demands of our

Government ought to be put aside as unworthy of consideration. No such excuse ought to be entertained for a moment, because, knowing what we do of the Cape of Good Hope, knowing how its revenues have been increased by the extension of territory as shown by the extent of good land advertised for sale after the annexation of the Transkei, with all these resources which have been so much increased by the expenditure we have incurred, they should be required to pay their due proportion of that expenditure. I have no doubt there will be an attempt made in another way to evade the demands of Her Majesty's Government. It will be said by the colony, "The responsibility of these operations is not ours, they were forced upon us by the action of the High Commissioner, and that in carrying out the policy of Her Majesty's Government. It was the view which the High Commissioner came to carry out that landed us in the expenditure and this war, and therefore we are not responsible." Now, I am bound to say in the first instance they have grounds in Cape Colony to make the assertion. There is no doubt her Majesty's Government did send a Chief Commissioner, and he did further a policy which directly and indirectly tended to foment these disturbances, which extended the area of the war and of the expenditure, but my position is this : whatever was the original responsibility of the Government in sanctioning the policy of their High Commissioner, the colonists have since, by their own policy, by every constitutional method, supported the Commissioner. Now, when the High Commissioner arrived at the Cape there was a Government in power presided over by Mr. Molteno, a man of great Cape experience, and who, for years, had taken a leading part in Cape politics. Mr. Molteno did not like the policy of the Government. I will not occupy the attention of the House on the point, but I will rather content myself with indicating what, if it were necessary and time offered, I could show by abundant reference to the blue book that there was a decided divergence of opinion between the Chief Commissioner and Mr. Molteno. Mr. Molteno believed that he and his Government knew best how to manage Cape affairs, and that the trouble on their frontier could be better managed than by the measures which the High Commissioner proposed. Now, it shows I am justified in claiming that Mr. Molteno, who was Prime Minister, wished to carry out the policy supported by the leading statesmen of this country of managing affairs upon their own responsibility, for, towards the end of the difference between the High Commissioner and Mr. Molteno, we come to the main point upon which Sir Bartle Frere disagreed with the ministers. Sir Bartle Frere, when he found that he could not induce Mr. Molteno to yield to his strong will—because it is quite evident that Sir Bartle Frere went to the Cape and was influenced throughout by a strong will, to which he was determined to make everybody yield, in one way or another—when he found there was the difference of opinion between himself and Mr. Molteno, they had a conversation on the grounds of this difference, and after Mr. Molteno had left, Sir Bartle Frere wrote a memorandum in which he jotted down the conversation which had just occurred, and he left it with Mr. Molteno to see if it was correct. Mr. Molteno disliked this—it was an unusual proceeding—and he refused to accept the exact accuracy of

the memorandum in which Sir Bartle Frere stated Mr. Molteno's views; but no doubt they were his views, for Mr. Molteno stated them afterwards. The memorandum goes on to say how, in the course of conversation, Mr. Molteno expressed a strong opinion that the conduct of affairs was entrusted too exclusively to military men, and that military men, whatever their ability in her Majesty's service, did not command such confidence as the colonists had in their own ministers and their power to do with their colonial force all that was necessary to restore the peace and order of the colony—that the reinforcements of her Majesty's troops asked for were not needed. This was a very strong statement for Mr. Molteno to make in the conversation with the Commissioner, and he repeats it, I find, in a memorandum of January 31st, 1878, in which he says the Government are prepared to undertake the responsibility of putting down the rebellion speedily and in the most effectual manner by colonial forces led by colonists, and not encumbered by military impediments, and these measures to be under the control of the Colonial Government, who were prepared to accept the responsibility of preserving peace and maintaining the defence of the colony. Now what happened? I declare, when I read what occurred, it makes me indignant when I read of the dictatorial manner in which Sir Bartle Frere dismissed the man from office, simply because he would maintain what we believe is the right principle of Colonial Government, that they should have the management who were asked to pay for it, and take the responsibility of defending their frontier and maintaining peace within their own borders. But, no, Sir Bartle Frere, with that dictatorial power which he has assumed so much to the disadvantage of the country, called into power a Government presided over by Mr. Sprigg; and here we come to the responsibility of the Colonial Government. If they had depended upon the Molteno Government they might have said that it is an Imperial policy forced upon us and for which we should not pay, but when Mr. Sprigg came into power, anyone who reads his manifesto will see that he came into power with the determination of taking advantage of the British policy to get a large amount of plundering for South Africa. I have not formed a high opinion of Mr. Sprigg's capacity as a Prime Minister, but he knows what he is about. In Mr. Trollope's work on South Africa, written at the time of the Transkei war, he mentions having gone into the House of Assembly and describes Mr. Molteno as Prime Minister and Mr. Sprigg as leading the Opposition. He says of Mr. Molteno, he "has been in parliamentary life for many years, having held a seat since the creation of the first House of Assembly in 1854—has been a very useful public servant, and thoroughly understands the nature of the work required of him." "I attended," continues Mr. Trollope, "one hot debate and heard the leaders of the Opposition attack the Prime Minister and his colleagues in the proper parliamentary manner. The question was one of defence against the Kaffirs, and it was made by the Opposition to appear that the object of the Premier was to rob the colony of its money." It is a curious thing that a year before he came into office, Mr. Sprigg was opposing Mr. Molteno because the latter wished to have the defence conducted out of colonial

funds. Well, this policy of Sir Bartle Frere was adopted by Mr. Sprigg's Government, and Mr. Sprigg's Government received the support of the Parliament then in existence. The Parliament was dissolved, and so far as I have ever heard, the return to the new Parliament proved that Mr. Sprigg's Government was extremely popular. In Cape Town, there were six candidates for four seats. Five of these candidates approved of the policy of the High Commissioner in the Zulu War, one attacked that policy and opposed confederation. The one who opposed the policy of the Commissioner was a remarkable man—a gentleman of the name of Saul Solomon—a man who for some years occupied an independent, but leading position in the Cape legislature—a man on whose opinion all parties placed great reliance. Well, he opposed the policy, and he, who been a member for a number of years, was turned out.

Sir Chas. Dilke : No, he came in on the minority vote.

Mr. Rylands : Oh, is that so? Well, I know he lost his position. What I wish to urge on the Government is this, that inasmuch as the Cape Legislature has adopted the policy of the Commissioner, which has become immensely popular in the Cape, simply because a large expenditure upon the war arises out of it, I think that the Government ought to come to this conclusion, that if Sir Bartle Frere is unable to obtain a satisfactory pecuniary arrangement with the colony, they ought to withdraw Sir Bartle Frere and send some representative who would be determined to put more pressure on the Sprigg Government. It may possibly arise that when we know more about the secret transactions going on, it may be that we shall find that some encouragement was given by Sir Bartle Frere to Mr. Sprigg to believe there would be some pecuniary assistance in carrying out their plans which induced Mr. Sprigg's Government to entirely endorse the policy which had been recommended to them. But it is quite clear that, so far as Government is concerned, those on the front bench have never gone from their position requiring the colonies to pay their proper share ; therefore, if there have been any transactions at the Cape which may have led to the supposition that Great Britain would not insist upon a share of the expenditure being borne by the colony, her Majesty's Government are not at all compromised by that. The other day we were talking about the policy of the future, and perhaps I may say a few words upon that. It is clear that in the future, when all this war is over, we must decide on a policy with regard to the frontier of the Cape. We are quite aware that Lord Grey is a distinguished advocate of paternal government. He would withdraw responsible government from the Cape and treat it like a Crown-colony, dealing with all Cape matters from Downing Street. He argues that it would be much better that all proposals in reference to national troubles, commercial interests, etc., should be decided for ourselves. But no one can seriously imagine that any such system would work. We should soon find that we cannot control the Cape, or from this country manage Cape affairs, with anything like efficiency. But there is another plan which apparently is almost as bad—that is, a plan which does not assume to be a paternal Government, but would continue a responsible Government at the Cape, and still insist upon an

interference, to a certain extent, with the management of affairs, claiming for this country a voice in the management of Cape affairs. A most absurd, untenable policy. We have followed it to some extent for thirty years, and I observe it is a policy which has high support in the person of my right hon. friend, the member for Bradford (Mr. W. E. Forster). He referred to the idea when he says, after all these financial transactions have closed, then we should go the Cape and say to the colonists: "Our terms must be different to what they have been. You must not dictate the policy—and we find the men and the money to carry it out. It would have to be an alliance on the terms that we should have a guiding voice in frontier policy, in the treatment of the natives, and in the mode in which war was carried on." Well, it seems to me this is a kind of bargain you cannot make with the Cape. How can you say to them, "You shall not dictate the policy, and we find the men?" Of course, if they have a House of Assembly, they will naturally dictate a policy; we cannot stop them. However (continues the right hon. gentleman) he believed there was really only one feeling in the House and in the country, which was that we must have our relation with the Cape colonies put upon a different footing,—that we would not join in unjust wars." (Hear, hear.) But we know well enough, that where you have a responsible government a colonial power, it is not possible to say—(I am assuming that you have a partnership)—this is an unjust war you are engaging in, and we will have nothing to do with it. Why, if we could take that course, we should not have been drawn into the Zulu war, which we believed unjust; and the Transkei war, I believe, ought to have been avoided. Why, nearly every war we have had in the colony has been an unjust war. It is quite clear, supposing we enter into such a bargain as that suggested by the hon. member for Bradford, the only effect would be we should still hold ourselves in readiness with our resources; and we find it utterly impossible to raise the question whether a war was just or unjust—we should be entrapped into the unfortunate position in which we now find ourselves. It is no use trying to adopt this middle course; you have but a choice of two courses, unless you choose to go on as before: one, to go back upon what I look upon as impossible, of governing the colony from Downing-street, and the other a policy of non-intervention. I believe the only safe plan is absolutely to withdraw from any part or parcel in their military arrangements. This is a policy for which I have high authority. Distinguished statesmen, Colonial Secretaries, have recognised the doctrine—Lord Cardwell, Lord Carnarvon, the Duke of Buckingham, Lord Granville,—that it is the interest and duty of the Imperial Government to withdraw as much as possible from interference in the internal affairs of the colonies, for their sakes as well as for our own; that the colonies should support their own charges, both civil and military, for government and defence. That was an opinion expressed by high authorities in the debate of 1851, when, on April 10th, Sir William Molesworth moved his first resolution, "That it is the opinion of this House that steps should be taken to relieve the country as speedily as possible from its present civil and military expenditure on account of the colonies, with the exception of its expenditure on account of military stations or convict

establishments." I will not trouble the House with quotations from the speeches, but several members distinguished on both sides of the House, who spoke in that debate of 1851, all declared that the only safe course was to withdraw from intermeddling with the colonial forces, trusting the control and their own defence to themselves. I will only give a short extract from the speech of a right. hon. gentleman who will command respect at least on this side, the right hon. member for Greenwich. On April 15th, 1851, he spoke of the "most mischievous and unsound system of managing the local affairs of the colonies from home." He contended that the wars on the Cape frontier were altogether local affairs. Then we have the report of the Select Committee on colonial and military expenditure, presided over by the hon. member for Exeter, in 1861. That committee reported, with respect to the South African colonies, and all those similarly circumstanced dependencies which contain large European populations, their security against war-like tribes or domestic disturbances should be provided for as far as possible by means of local efforts and local organisation; and that the main object of any system adopted by the country should be to encourage such efforts, not merely with a view to diminish imperial expenditure, but for the still more important purpose of stimulating the spirit of self-reliance in colonial communities. I think I am justified, on these authorities, in asking the House to pass my resolution; and I hope the expression of opinion may lead to a determination, on the part of the Government, to take steps to secure what I think would be a fair measure of justice to the taxpayers of this country.

Sir. M. Hicks-Beach said that, though agreeing very much with the wishes that they could leave the colonies to the management of their own affairs, there was one essential problem that had to be solved, and that was to induce them and enable them to take such measures as were necessary for their protection in time of war. He must say, on behalf of the colonies, that the present Ministry, with Mr. Sprigg at their head, had done more in that direction than any of their predecessors. He did not think it would be fair to charge the Cape Colony with making a profit out of the Zulu war. They had incurred a large expense in connection with the Transkei war, and most of the forces employed in that war had been colonial forces. With regard to the distribution of expenditure, they had endeavoured as far as they reasonably could to charge upon the Colonial Treasury that which should be charged, and to obtain a clear understanding as to the settlement of the expenditure between the mother country and the colony. What had fallen from the hon. member for Burnley as to the ability of the colony to bear the charges he wished imposed upon her was no slight testimony to the justness of the expectations that were held out by the Chancellor of the Exchequer that a considerable portion of the expenditure would be borne in South Africa.

The amendment was negatived without a division, and the House went into Committee of Supply.

No. IX.

Annual Address to his Constituents at Burnley, Nov. 10th, 1879.

Mr. Mayor, Ladies, and Gentlemen.—At the present time, in London, the Lord Mayor is giving a grand banquet to her Majesty's Ministers, and at that banquet there will be a large number of distinguished guests who will be anxiously waiting for the utterances of the Sphinx of modern politics, and they will be prepared to guess as far as may be the riddles of statecraft that the Premier will put before them. It is quite possible, gentlemen, that we shall have from the Prime Minister another development of the "Asian mystery." We may, perhaps, in this speech to-night, have the curtain lifted so that we can look into the secret arcana which Lord Beaconsfield tells us are only worthy to be presided over by sovereigns and by statesmen, and there may be announced to-night some new stroke of policy which will disquiet Europe and add to the gloom and to the distress of the British Empire. Gentlemen, when Mr. Disraeli was young he wrote a novel, and that novel was called "Vivian Grey," and it was well understood that Vivian Grey was the prototype of Mr. Disraeli himself. In the mouth of Vivian Grey, Mr. Disraeli put these words—"I want Europe to talk of me;" and Lord Beaconsfield, as Prime Minister, is gratifying the wish of Vivian Grey, and at the present moment the whole of Europe is talking about him. Well, now, gentlemen, it is more than likely that Lord Beaconsfield will announce to-night some new stroke of policy because Parliament is not sitting. You will observe, that the Tory Government takes the opportunity when the representatives of the people are away from London to bring forward new schemes in order that they may not be controlled by Parliament. You remember that this time last year Lord Beaconsfield at the Mansion House took the opportunity of making that immoral announcement that we were going to war with Afghanistan for a scientific frontier, or in other words, that we were going to take by force from other people property that belonged to them. Gentlemen, it is no new thing for my Lord Beaconsfield to treat the representatives of the people with contempt in those early novels to which I have alluded. There page after page is written in order to decry and to degrade the character of the popular representatives of the British Empire. It is quite impossible to calculate on what Lord Beaconsfield may say or may do; but we may calculate at least upon this that he will not make use of words tending to promote "Peace on earth and good will to men." The operative, with his strong hard-worked muscles, earning his daily bread at low wages and scanty employment, longs for peace. The manufacturer who has seen for some years past his capital declining, and who is looking forward [to the future with grave apprehensions, longs for peace; and the merchant longs for peace in order that those markets of the world which were formerly open to British industry, but which are now closed by the want of confidence produced by her Majesty's Government, may again be open for the labour of this country. Gentlemen, commerce and industry grow and flourish in the sunshine of peace. They fade and

decay under the clouds of war. It is possible also that Lord Beaconsfield may say something to-night on the subject of the dissolution of Parliament. (A voice : He daren't.) I am bound to say I agree with you. I do not believe he will dissolve. Why, the Government are never tired of justifying, by their majority in Parliament, their tamperings with the rights of the House of Commons, their straining of the Royal prerogative, their turbulent foreign policy, and their wicked aggressions in Afghanistan and Africa. They say that all these have the approval of the majority in the House of Commons, and therefore they are no doubt justified in what they have done. Why, gentlemen, I do believe that Lord Beaconsfield and his Cabinet, if they broke every one of the Ten Commandments, would think that they were justified if they got a majority in the House of Commons, and you may rely upon it they will keep this subservient Parliament as long as they can. We do not believe that Parliament represents the opinion of the country. It was elected in 1874, under entirely different auspices, and before these questions had arisen ; and you recollect that Mr. Disraeli went to Manchester. It was just before the general election, and he talked about the Tory party coming into office to promote sanitary legislation. Mr. Disraeli said, "*sanitas sanitatum omnia sanitas*"—and it did seem as though the great Tory party were going into power upon a policy of sewage. Gentlemen, the Government say that they require another year in order to complete their measures—and so they must have another year for them to fill up the measure of their iniquity. We must have another year of wasteful expenditure, another year of harassing of trade and industry, another year of a foreign policy full of "envy, hatred, and all uncharitableness ;" another year of scientific frontiers and of robbing our neighbours' territory. Yes, they are to complete their full seven years ; and in those seven years they will have done much to destroy the fruits of the prosperous years of Mr. Gladstone's administration. Gentlemen, their completing the seven years reminds me of Pharaoh's dream :—"And it came to pass at the end of two full years that Pharaoh dreamed, and behold he stood by the river. And behold there came up out of the river seven well-favoured kine and fat-fleshed, and they fed in a meadow. And behold seven other kine came up after them out of the river, ill-favoured and lean-fleshed, and stood by the other kine on the brink of the river. And the ill-favoured and lean-fleshed kine did eat up the seven well-favoured and fat kine. So Pharaoh awoke. And he slept and dreamed the second time, and behold seven ears of corn came up upon one stalk, rank and good. And behold seven thin ears and blasted with the east wind sprung up after them. And the seven thin ears devoured the seven rank and full ears." Gentlemen, the last session of Parliament was one of Pharaoh's thin ears of corn blasted with the east wind that had done something to swallow up the prosperity of Mr. Gladstone's administration. I shall not attempt to go into the details of what they did in Parliament. The last session was flat, stale, and unprofitable. The small attempts the Government made at legislation were feeble and even mischievous, and, with regard to many important questions, they entirely ignored them. The Government wished, no doubt, to divert the attention of

the people from home questions by their turbulent foreign policy. I might quote on this subject the words which Mr. Disraeli made use of some years ago in regard to Lord Palmerston, and which apply in a marked manner to his present career. He said "that the policy of Lord Palmerston was turbulent abroad in order that he might be left quiet and unassailed at home, and this he accomplished by a system which meant increased expenditure, large taxation, and neglect of internal administrative reforms." Gentlemen, that is exactly our experience of the present Government. We have had a neglect of domestic reforms; our attention has been absorbed by the restless and turbulent foreign policy of the Government, and we have had an enormous increase of expenditure. Now, gentlemen, in regard to this increase of expenditure, the Government try to conceal it by all kinds of devices. They do not meet the expenditure by laying taxes, but they borrow and try to mislead the House of Commons and the country in regard to the burdens that they are preparing for the backs of the people. Now, I observe that the Chancellor of the Exchequer in Dublin the other day made a most extraordinary statement. He said, "Our revenue, it is true, does not show the elasticity it formerly showed, and we find it impossible to keep down our expenditure in a time of war to the absolute level we should desire at a time of peace;" and he further said, "If anyone asserts that the finances of this country are in such a position that the revenue is not sufficient to cover the expenditure, he is saying that which is not the case." Then he went on to say, "If you look at the matter calmly and see what the revenue and expenditure is, you will find that even in these hard times, even with this failing revenue and heavy expenditure, the revenue considerably more than covers the annual expenditure, and leaves a margin for the reduction of debt; and all that can be said is that we are not able to reduce the debt under the present circumstances as fast as we could wish." Now, gentlemen, the fact is that that is about as elastic a statement as I ever read. He, in the face of the country, makes a statement which is notoriously incorrect, and it does seem to me that her Majesty's Government go up and down on the stump in order to find means of deceiving the public in regard to their proceedings. That was the case in Manchester on a recent occasion, and it certainly was the case in the speech of Sir Stafford Northcote. Now, I have before me a statement of the reduction of debt, and of the expenditure of this country, and I find that the total national debt in March, 1875, which was the year following Mr. Gladstone's Government—the total amount of funded debt, unfunded debt, estimated capital of terminal annuities amounted to £775,348,386, whereas, on March 31st, 1878, the debt amounted to £777,781,596, being an absolute increase of debt of £2,433,210. Now it has gone worse than that. In 1878-9 the revenue actually received amounted to £83,116,000, and the actual expenditure amounted to £85,400,000, so that upon the year ending March, 1879, so far from it being true that the revenue met the expenditure, there was an absolute deficiency of £2,284,000. Now, I am utterly at a loss to understand how it was possible for the Chancellor of the Exchequer to have made a statement which is contradicted by the figures I have just quoted, and

which I have taken from the statistical abstract presented to Parliament. Well, I will tell you how we are going on. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, for the year ending March next, estimated a revenue of £83,055,000, and an expenditure of £81,153,000, and he said in his speech that there would be an estimated surplus of £1,898,000, which he thought would be sufficient to pay the expenses of the Zulu war. Why, in the first place, the revenue of the Chancellor of the Exchequer is disappearing. He will not meet the amount by over a million that he anticipates, and, therefore, instead of receiving, as he supposes, £83,000,000, he will probably not receive more than £82,000,000. But what about the expenditure? The Chancellor of the Exchequer admitted that the cost of the Zulu war up to the end of the session would amount to four and a half millions sterling—not only swallowing up the “surplus,” but leaving a deficiency of nearly £1,200,000, which has been borrowed by means of Exchequer bonds. But the cost of that war will be nearer £9,000,000, and that will have to be found by somebody. Well, then, in addition to the Zulu war, there is the Afghan war. You recollect at the time the Treaty of Gandamak was signed, the Government said that the cost of the war in Afghanistan had been two millions. Well, what did they do? They lent £2,000,000 to the East India Government without interest. They did not say, like bold men, “Sooner or later we shall have to charge this upon the British taxpayer, and, therefore, let us meet the difficulty.” No; but they said, “We will lend it to India without interest for seven years, to be paid back.” Of course, they won’t get it back again. I do not anticipate anything of the kind, but they hide their expenditure by that means. Well, now, that treaty was a delusion and a snare. When Parliament rose the Government was in a fool’s paradise, and I do not hesitate to say that nothing has shown their great incapacity in carrying out the Government of this country to a larger extent than the way in which they dealt with Afghanistan. They had the lessons of history, but they were heedless of the lessons of history. They heeded not the warning which was given to them. They sent an envoy—a British envoy—to Cabul without a proper escort, without proper protection, although they were told that the effect of that would be almost certain to lead to his destruction, as had been the case with a former envoy. Well, the envoy was murdered, and of course we had to have another war. We are now occupying the country, and the latest news is that this potentate—this Afghan prince with whom we engaged in the Treaty of Gandamak to support him on his throne—is now found to have been conspiring against us, and he is deposed from his throne, and is to be carried practically a prisoner into one of the departments of the Indian Government. But what will follow? We shall have to hold down this wild, rugged, and barren country, extending over thousands of square miles, and inhabited by a fierce and turbulent race, by the force of British bayonets—and all that will cost money. It is calculated that we shall have to pay at least two or three millions a year as long as we hold Afghanistan, in order that we may keep them in our power and in our subjection. Who has to pay all these millions for this Imperial policy? India cannot pay it, for she is too poor to pay it. They have carried down the income-tax in

India to people who have a wretched pittance of four shillings a week. You cannot screw anything more out of the Indian population without danger, and without creating a large amount of distress and destitution. Who will have to pay? I will tell you. It is that respectable character who used to dress in the good, old-fashioned, English way. I mean John Bull. He has now chosen to strut up and down the world in an imperial costume, and he will have to put his hand into his imperial pocket and pay. But leaving out the expenditure that is now going on to this frightful extent, and taking the year ending last March, 1879,—what was the expenditure? It was £85,407,000, an amount ten and a half millions more than the expenditure of the last year under Mr. Gladstone's Government. Well, I found it my duty, in the face of this great and increasing expenditure, to challenge the opinion of the House of Commons by moving resolutions condemning the Government, and I must say at once that before I moved those resolutions I had the honour of a consultation with our great and illustrious leader, Mr. Gladstone. I received from the first the most cordial approval on the part of Mr. Gladstone, who said at once that he would both support by his vote, and also by his speech, the resolutions which I intended to bring forward. When I brought forward these resolutions we were charged with attacking the Government for not laying on taxes. Nothing of the sort. We attacked the Government for spending the money. Although these resolutions are somewhat long, I may be allowed to read them, because they are in themselves a sort of a speech upon the financial condition of the country. The first resolution I moved was this : "That this House views with regret the great increase in the national expenditure." The second was : "That such expenditure, for which her Majesty's Government is responsible, is not necessary in the opinion of this House to provide for the security of this country at home, or for the protection of its interests abroad ;" thirdly, "That the taxes required to meet the present expenditure impede the operations of agriculture and manufactures, and diminish the funds for the employment of labour in all branches of productive industry, thereby tending to produce pauperism and crime, and adding to the local and general burdens of the people." 4th : "This House is of opinion that immediate steps should be taken to reduce the present expenditure to such amount as may not only equalise the revenue and expenditure, but may give material relief to the British taxpayers." These resolutions were supported by the whole of the Liberal party. Mr. Gladstone and other Liberal leaders spoke in their favour ; I had 230 members voting for those resolutions, and 303 against them, so that the majority of the present House of Commons in favour of Tory expenditure and taxation was 73. Well, gentlemen, at all events we did this. We directed the attention of the country to this great expenditure which the Government were trying to conceal by borrowing and by other devices, and we proved to the country that now, as always, the Tory party are in favour of extravagance in their Government, and that the Liberal party are in favour of economy. That was proved in the resolutions which I moved. But in the present House of Commons there is no chance of our producing any effect upon the expenditure. They are determined to

support the Government in whatever the Government choose to do. We are expending the money, and what have we got for it? We have got a very large amount of additional territory, but what is it worth? We have got the Transvaal—a very large country, the size of France. We took possession of it against the wishes of a large majority of the white inhabitants, and now these inhabitants are sullen and disaffected, and are threatening rebellion, and we shall have a great deal of trouble to keep them quiet. Then we have got Zululand. Now, you know the Tory Government pretend that they have not taken Zululand. Who has it, my friend says. Well, they have made a heptarchy of chiefs, at the head of which stands John Dunn; but does anyone suppose for a moment that practically Zululand is not under British control, and that we shall not be responsible in keeping the people of that country quiet? It will cost us, no doubt, a considerable expenditure. You know the Government have told us again and again that they would not annex Afghanistan. What are they doing now, I should like to know? “Oh,” they say, “we have not got it.” I will tell you what they have got; they have got a thundering big white elephant that they cannot get rid of. Then you know we have Cyprus, and what do we do with that island? We employ forced labour there; we gag the press, we maintain slavery, and we have established a despotic Government with power to punish people without trial in Cyprus, and we have violated the feelings of all the Greek religious population by shaving Greek priests in prison. We have swallowed a great deal, and I believe that we shall swallow more. I believe that we are about to swallow another white elephant in Burmah, and I should not be at all surprised if that were the case. The first Napoleon said very truly, and he could say it from his own experience, “There is one disease of which great powers die; they die of indigestion.” You know, they swallow too much. They stretch out and bring into their capacious maw one tract of country and one kingdom after another, and then it happens that they do die of indigestion, and history records both in ancient and modern times, in the rise and fall of great empires, the truth of the maxim which Napoleon laid down. I maintain that the Imperial policy of our present Government in its folly and greed of aggrandisement of territory is piling a great weight on the shoulders of British Industry, which may possibly in after years lead to most disastrous consequences. Well, now, what is the excuse for all this turbulent and aggressive policy on the part of the Government? I will tell you; they have only one excuse. Whenever you come to analyse what these members of the Government are saying, you find that it all comes down to one point, and that is the bugbear of Russia. The Tories must always have a bugbear. They always used to have Bonaparte, and I dare say when some of you were young, you knew what the bugbear of Bonaparte cost the country. Now Bonaparte’s day is gone by, and so they must have Russia; and why do they want a bugbear always? Why, they want to get John Bull into a state of excitement and flurry, and then when he has lost his head, they put their hand into his pockets. Mr. Gladstone in 1878 wrote a pamphlet in which he ridiculed the idea of our being scared by that hobgoblin of Russia. “Many a time,” he said, “has it done

good service on the stage. It is at present out of repair and unavailable." But he did not know who were going to follow him. In Mr. Gladstone's mind, the materials out of which this hobgoblin had been made were out of repair and thrown into the lumber-room of the State ; but the present Government have gathered them together ; they have employed clever artificers to put one joint on another ; they have fashioned the features with all sorts of terrors ; and they have covered it with an old coat of paint, until it is a very *monstrum horrendum* ; and now they bring it upon the stage to exhibit, and Mr. Cross and Lord Salisbury are the showmen. You recollect that in Manchester Lord Salisbury said there were glad tidings of great joy—because Austria and Germany had joined hands against Russia ; and he seemed to think that the old lines with regard to the Turkish empire need not be persisted in, and that we could depend upon Austria and Germany to protect Turkey from Russia. If they have found that out, why did not they find it out sooner ? This is what we have been telling them all along. We have all along said they might rely upon it that Austria and Germany had far greater interests than we had to prevent any aggression on the part of Russia, and that if Russia attempted to come down and take territory in Eastern Europe she would have to answer to Austria and Germany ; and, in point of fact, there was no reason whatever for Russia doing anything of the kind. In 1876, before the breaking out of the war, the emperors of Russia, Germany, and Austria met together, and decided upon the lines to take with regard to Turkey, and then asked the assistance of the rest of Europe. France agreed, the rest agreed, but we stood out and said " No,—we won't allow you to act without us ; we must have a finger in the pie ; " and so we broke up the Berlin Memorandum, and sent our fleet to Besika Bay. We created consternation in Europe, and broke up the concert of Europe ; and I say that the present Government are as responsible for the breaking out of war between Russia and Turkey as it is possible for any Government to be. If they had taken the proper course there would never have been a war, and I believe that we should have seen great changes in Turkey for the benefit of the Christian population of that despotic empire. During the last fifty years we have had this bugbear of Russia shown us in order to terrify us ; and yet, let me tell you this, that Russia, during the past 130 years, has not made aggressions of territory equal at all to England. We are in the habit of being told to look at Russia—what an aggressive power she is ; and, therefore, I think you should know what the fact is. During the last 130 years we have seized by conquest 2,650,000 square miles, with a population of 250,000,000 ; and in the same time Russia has seized upon 1,642,000 square miles, with a population of only 17,133,000 people. During that period we have not been satiated in our lust of territory. We have obtained vast tracts of territory in all parts of the world. For instance, we have obtained 3,000,000 of square miles in Australia ; and we have obtained, as I have just now mentioned, 114,000 in the Transvaal, and now we are stretching out our hands for Zululand and Afghanistan. There is not a quarter of the globe where it has been possible to put a garrison on any point of vantage that England has not taken advantage

of; and still we, having done more than any country in the world in the shape of aggression, and in the conquering of territory, are now turning round upon Russia; and because that country has been, no doubt, during the same period engaged in similar work, we are told that she is a country that must be opposed at all hazards, and must be regarded as being in some way the enemy of the human race. About fifty years ago the Russophobists prophesied all manner of things about Russia, just as foolish as those things which Lord Salisbury and Mr. Cross are prophesying now. We know that the prophecies of 50 years ago have not come true. But Lord Dudley Stewart, in the House of Commons, prophesied that Russia would take possession of Italy, Turkey, Greece, Norway, and that probably even France might be endangered. It was then said that Russia from the north would gradually swallow up one after another the small German States. Russia did nothing of the kind. Prussia swallowed them up, and Prussia is now the great German Empire. Let me remind you that, relatively, 50 years ago, Russia was more powerful in Europe than she is now. Germany is infinitely more powerful now—a great empire, with all the various parts bound together, in one common bond, instead of a number of small, weak, petty principalities. And then there was Italy. Fifty years ago Italy was a geographical expression—with all the different states parcelled in different dukedoms, and part of it under the control of Austria. And now Italy is a great kingdom, counting for a great deal in the diplomacy of Europe. And you may rely upon it that, with great powers like Germany, France, or Italy, in Europe, it is utterly ridiculous to speak of the equilibrium being in the slightest danger from the action of a power like Russia. It is a very curious thing that Lord Salisbury himself, two years ago, ridiculed the Russophobists, and pointed out the folly of what they said. And I think it is rather important that you should bear that in mind. Only two years ago—in October, 1877, at Bradford—Lord Salisbury said, “Over the whole of this country, for some time past, I think a very exaggerated view has been entertained of the aggressive power of Russia; and that exaggerated feeling has operated in that country, and in England, to produce apprehension and inclinations to military action which would otherwise never have been felt. I regard it as a great gain for the cause of peace in this country that any over-weighting or excessive impression of the aggressive power of Russia has been, I hope, dissipated for ever.” In the House of Lords there was a foolish peer who expressed great alarm about Russia, and Lord Salisbury—on June 11th, 1877—got up and ridiculed the idea of danger from Russian aggression on the north-western frontier of India, and told their lordships to study the maps. He said: “You have been looking at little maps, and you fancy Russia is very near our north-western frontier. Study a large map, and then you will see that Russia is separated from us by a great district of wild mountains and difficult country.” On the same day Lord Salisbury made a speech at the Merchant Taylors’, and used these words: “I have a colonial friend who has been very much exercised in his mind, and is in a very anxious state, in connection with the Cape of Good Hope. He pointed out to me that Russia was

in Armenia, that Armenia was the key of Syria, that Syria was the key of Egypt, and that anyone advancing into Egypt has the key of Africa, and by this succession of keys long drawn out he shows that the present victories of Russia seriously menace South Africa. I have done my best to console him, but I feel that his anxious feelings are only characteristic of the apprehensions I hear around me." And then Lord Salisbury continued by saying, "It has generally been acknowledged to be madness to go to war for an idea, but if anything is yet more unsatisfactory it is to go to war against a nightmare." Now, gentlemen, how is it possible to reconcile these wise and prudent utterances with the reckless policy of the present Government, and how is it possible to show that Lord Salisbury now, in the language which he has been using at Manchester, is consistent with the Lord Salisbury of two years ago? I have a strong conviction that the explanation of this great change in language is this: I believe that the Government, feeling that public opinion is going against them, knowing that they must cast about in some way or other to rouse or excite the feelings of the public into some fever of a war policy, looking back, as they do, to the time of the Crimean war, when, under the folly, the wickedness, and the excitement of that time, some of the greatest statesmen, and some of the best Liberals, were turned out of the House of Parliament at the general election, they seem to hope and believe that by getting up a similar feeling they might, perhaps, secure similar success. I dare say they do not want to go to war with Russia; they only want to keep up the excitement of a war feeling; they want to impose upon the public with the belief that we have, by some patriotic self-denial, to support Lord Beaconsfield and Lord Salisbury, in order to destroy the machinations of this great Power. They want to bamboozle you, gentlemen, as they always try to bamboozle you, and I think that while they may be doing that with the impression that it is simply a game to promote their own ends, they may really go too far, and they may, by this constant suspicion of Russia, possibly involve us at length in a European war. I say that the Government, in their policy, have done nothing to resist Russia. They have actually strengthened Russia in the East, because they have increased the position which Russia occupies with regard to the eastern provinces of Turkey. When the Eastern Question broke out, there was a splendid opportunity for our Government to have accomplished a great purpose. It was an opportunity for obtaining incalculable good,—they turned it into an occasion of vast evil. Three years ago the Turkish despotism, which had affected some of the countries of Europe, seemed to be falling into pieces; every loss to Turkey was a gain to freedom. At one side of the scales was a loathsome despotism, keeping under its control, in the midst of cruelty, trouble, and distress, a large number of the industrious Christian populations; and on the other side there were the Christian populations themselves struggling for freedom and looking forward to the time when, with the assistance, possibly, of some of the great powers of Europe, they might be free from that intolerable bondage. Lord Beaconsfield had the opportunity of putting the weight of British influence either in the scale of despotism or that of freedom, but, in accordance with those traditions which ally the Tory party to despotism, he gave

the weight of England in the scales against freedom and in favour of despotism. Well, now, gentlemen, Mr. Cross, feeling this—feeling that they could hardly justify themselves in supporting this monstrous despotism of Turkey—said at Leigh, in Lancashire, “No one abhors the bad government of Turkey more than I do. None is more anxious to see reforms carried out in that empire, and no one would stir a finger—I know I never would, nor any member of the Government—in such abuses as have been brought before us.” Gentlemen, Mr. Cross was then standing in the face of a multitude of Great Britain, and, like a character of old, he washed his hands in the presence of the multitude and said he was free from this oppression. These words are mere hollow expressions. Not stir a finger! Why the power—the whole power—of the British Government was exerted in order to maintain that despotism, and but for the action of the British Government, that despotism would have fallen. But now, gentlemen, there seems to be another change in operation—there is another *coup de theatre*. We are told that some very extraordinary circumstances have been taking place in the East, and that the British fleet has been ordered to move into Turkish waters, and that there had been an ultimatum presented to the Porte; and now we are told that the British Fleet was not sent to Turkish waters at all, and in fact they try to make us believe that there is very little indeed in the whole affair. But no question about it, there does seem to have been a certain amount of pressure put upon the Turk in order to secure the carrying out of the Anglo-Turkish Convention by taking measures to remove the complaints of the people in Asia Minor. I must say, I am entirely at a loss to understand this change in policy. Some people fancy it is a mere electioneering trick, and that they are doing this in order to try to prove to us that they are very active in looking after the Christians in Asia Minor, and to show that they are not going to allow this Anglo-Turkish Convention to become a dead letter. That may or may not be so, but one thing is quite certain, that if what is stated in the papers is true, Government has made what is really a very considerable change in their policy in Turkey. Now, I see in the *Daily News* to-day what I must say is a curious statement on this subject. A correspondent in the *Daily News* say that “Sir Henry Layard’s demands comprised the renewal in full of the agreement respecting Cyprus and reforms in Asia Minor as follows:—Appointment of Englishmen as collectors and inspectors of the finances; formation of an armed force under English officers, and the establishment of courts of justice under the presidency of English judges.” The correspondent further states that the Porte has consulted the ambassadors separately on this subject. The Austrian and Italian ambassadors advised the Porte to concede the English demands. The German ambassador reserved his opinion. The French ambassador answered in effect that there was no reason for precipitancy. If the demands are anything like what is here stated—demands such as the occupation of the country by English officials—what does that mean? Do you suppose that Turkey will ever submit to have the armies of Asia Minor under the control of Englishmen? Do you think they will ever submit to have the financial arrangements under the control

of Englishmen? Why, it would stop all the plunder that the Pashas are now enjoying; it would, no doubt, open out a nice field for a great number of promising young gentlemen, who are not able to find occupation at home, who might find nice appointments as officers in the army in Asia Minor, and also as managers of the finances. But, gentlemen, there are two or three things which would have to occur before that could be done. In the first place you must have Turkey willing to give up entirely its independence so far as Asia Minor is concerned, and ready to give up one of its greatest sources of income and plunder. You must also have the power of securing that England should take this position, because, although my Lords Beaconsfield and Salisbury are so very active in condemning other countries, they don't remember that the other powers of Europe are looking with great suspicion upon us, and they are asking, "What are these people intending to do?" I have no doubt this Austrian and German alliance, if all could be found out about it, would have in some parts of the arrangements some things that would not be very satisfactory to the British Government if they knew all about it. In one of these early novels to which I have alluded, he spoke, amongst other things, of the occupation of Cyprus by England. He said that the English "would take Cyprus as a compensation." England has done that under his control. He said in one of his early novels that the Queen was to be made Empress of India, and the Queen has been made Empress of India; and he said, amongst other things, these words, and they may, perhaps, give some indication of this new move of policy—he said:—"If the English would only understand their own interests, with my co-operation, Syria might be theirs. The Porte never could govern it." And in another passage:—"It appears to me, at the first glance, that the whole country to the Euphrates might be conquered in a campaign; but then I want to know how far artillery is necessary, whether it be indispensable. Then, again, the lesser Asia. We should never lose sight of lesser Asia as the principal scene of our movements; the richest regions of the world, almost depopulated, and a position from which we might magnetise Europe." Gentlemen, Lord Beaconsfield's sympathies are towards the East—not to the rising prosperous West. Lord Beaconsfield's sympathies are not with you, the plodding, industrious millions, but they are with ideas of grandeur and of empire—ideas which in all history of the world, no doubt, have been right enough for the enjoyment of kings and of statesmen and of generals, but they crush the main body of the people like a nether millstone. Gentlemen, it is for you to say whether you will or will not allow this mad policy to continue. I cannot tell you where it is going to stop. They, no doubt, by postponing the dissolution of Parliament will have several months more in order to increase the difficulties and obligations of this country; but, gentlemen, the dissolution of Parliament must come in the course of a very few months, and it will then be for you to do your duty, and it will be for the constituencies to do theirs. Gentlemen, when I see this magnificent meeting—a meeting of such magnitude, filled as it is by men of such great intelligence—I cannot but feel that at all events in Burnley there is no doubt as to the views which the great body of the people take.

When, about four years ago, I came to this borough a perfect stranger, well, I certainly didn't know any of the electors of the borough—I came to the borough without any personal friends; I came because the Liberal electors of Burnley, by a unanimous vote, did me the great honour of asking me to stand as their candidate. Gentlemen, when I came here, no doubt known to Liberal politicians, but still not personally known to many, I was met during that election with a large amount of misrepresentation, and there were certain things attributed to me in regard to opinion and fact which were entirely untrue. I was met by my opponent with only scant courtesy; but, gentlemen, you did me the great honour of returning me to Parliament by a large majority, and at all events I may say this—that there is no danger now of any misrepresentations having any effect. You have been able to watch my course during the last four years both in Parliament and out of it. Gentlemen, I have not spared myself when I thought I could promote the Liberal interest, or the welfare of the people at large, and I shall come before you when a dissolution takes place with the most perfect confidence. I do not know even now by whom I am to be opposed, and I certainly shall not complain—I have no right to complain—if the Tories think fit to oppose my re-election, for they are fully entitled to do so; but I do say this to you, gentlemen—and if my voice could reach other constituencies I should like to say it to them—that there has never been an occasion within the memory of any of us when the issues put before the constituencies of this country have been so serious or so important as they are now. If you give a new lease of power to Lord Beaconsfield you strike a still further blow at the popular representation of the people. You have seen how the House of Commons has been treated, and how the majority of the House of Commons have been willing to be treated. Are you willing that the Royal Prerogative—that the mere influence of the Government—shall over-ride the great council of the nation, to prevent the judgments of the people? Are you willing that the policy which has been carried out to this extent, already involving this country in immense obligations, in enormous losses, and in a vast expenditure, in consequence of a sort of poetic frame of mind of a statesman who is more a novelist than a statesman—are you willing that his schemes shall be so far developed as to add from year to year new sources of difficulty and danger to the British Empire—are you willing that the great principles of British honour and truth that we in this country have at all times been ready to hold up in the sight of mankind and maintain by our power—are you willing that these great principles shall be still further dragged down in the mire and trampled upon? If, gentlemen, you are willing that this thing shall continue, then the sin will be yours, and the sin will be of the people of this country who, with their minds enlightened, shall continue to support this Government. But if you are not willing—and, gentlemen, I believe you are not willing—I believe that Lancashire will not be willing, if you are not willing that this thing should be continued, then I call upon you, every one of you, when the election comes in this borough, in this county, wherever you are, to be determined that you will fight in such a way as to succeed by a very large majority; and rely

upon this, that with you I shall be ready to fight the same battle for victory.

No. X.

Speech delivered in the Public Hall, Warrington, Dec. 10, 1879.

Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen, when some future Macaulay writes the history of the present century, I think he will find a very perplexing problem in the discussion and description of the present Government. I can imagine that that historian will lay the body of the Government, like a *corpus vili*, upon the historical dissecting board, will try to find out its hidden springs of action, its surprising organization, and its very wonderful structure. Why, gentlemen, we are having a Government which, I venture to say, is one of the most remarkable Governments which ever existed in this country, and under conditions of the most surprising character. I don't know whether in Warrington there are any people who believe that Englishmen are the ten lost tribes of Israel. I saw some discussion on that subject some years ago, and I believe there are a number of worthy and excellent people in this kingdom who do verily believe that we English people are the lost tribes of Israel. I can quite imagine these good people having a very strong conviction that there is a movement in progress, and that, in fact, there is a very great prospect of a Semitic revival, and that Benjamin Disraeli is going to lead us all back to the Holy Land. Our Prime Minister always turns his eyes to the rising sun—his notions are entirely Oriental, and he seems to have a notion that by some means or other the plodding, money-getting, flat-nosed Franks, as he calls them, will be transmuted into a higher, into a loftier class of nations, residing in Eastern regions, treading in the footsteps of the great monarchies of the ancient world, and following those traditions of empire and conquest which rendered those monarchies so glorious. Just see how wonderful it is that this statesman of ours, who is more a man of Oriental mind than a true Briton—this statesman of ours enjoys the unbounded confidence of the Queen, whom he flatters with Imperial titles—with the attribute of Divine sovereignty, and with the exercise of prerogative unknown in these later days. This Prime Minister of ours is surrounded by a Cabinet for the most part of mediocrities—and, by a skill which is wonderful, he plays with these men like marionettes. He has a subservient Parliament, the majority of whom are willing to register the decrees of the Prime Minister without question or without doubt. The fact is, Lord Beaconsfield assumes to play the part of Grand Vizier of an Oriental despot. He doesn't take the Parliament of England into his confidence, he doesn't consult the representatives of the people. No, he treats the House of Commons as Napoleon III. treated the Senate and assembly of France, simply as an adjunct of the monarchy and of the ministers; and not, as they ought to be, as the keystone of the constitution. Now, gentlemen, I say that is Imperialism: that is personal rule: that is the fungus which has been planted on the British

constitution. Its form is of foreign origin. It is unsuited to the climate of England, and it is obnoxious and distasteful to the British people. I say that we are living at the present moment under a revolutionary Government, who have attacked the vital principle of the constitution, and who are attempting to alter in a dangerous manner the settled relationships between the Crown and the other estates of the realm. The fact is the spirit of Lord Beaconsfield, of Lord Beaconsfield's policy, would have made him a Strafford under Charles the First and a Bolingbroke under Queen Anne. Strafford, because he unduly pressed the King's prerogative against the people, lost his head; and Bolingbroke for the same crime was banished from the country. But Lord Beaconsfield meets with very different treatment. His "blushing honours are full upon him." He is made a Knight of the Garter—he is made Earl of Beaconsfield; and for what I know before he dies he may be created Duke of Cyprus. Gentlemen, there is but one way of advancing the prerogative of the Crown in these modern days, and that is by abasing Parliament—that is, by limiting the powers and limiting the authority of the representatives of the people. Everything which Parliament loses the Crown and the Ministers of the Crown gain, and every attack upon the rights and powers and privileges of Parliament is an attack upon the rights and privileges of the people at large. Now, gentlemen, what does Lord Beaconsfield think about that? How does he regard the British Parliament? Well, if you wish to know the real facts of Lord Beaconsfield's opinions you must go to his fiction. If you want to be beguiled by agreeable fiction you must listen to what he calls statements of facts, and therefore I go to his novels; and if you will allow me I will give you a few elegant extracts to show what he thinks about the Parliament of this country. Lord Beaconsfield says in his books "Parliamentary representation was the happy device of a ruder age, to which it was admirably adapted, an age of semi-civilization." He says "An educated nation recoils from the vicariate of what is called representative government." "Your House of Commons, that has absorbed all the other powers in the State, will in all probability fall more rapidly than it rose." Then he says, "The House of Commons is the House of the few; the Sovereign is the Sovereign of all; the proper leader of the people is the individual who sits on the throne." He says, again, "The Ministers of the Crown are responsible to their master; they are not the Ministers of Parliament;" and he talks in his books of the "usurpation by Parliament of the prerogative of the Crown." He calls prerogative "a Divine dominion," and speaks of the "profane exercise of the sacred rights of sovereignty by political classes." I daresay when these passages were written a generation ago by Mr. Disraeli, the younger, they would be regarded as "the hare-brained chatter of irresponsible frivolity." But now the matter becomes very different. We see these opinions which were expressed by Mr. Disraeli in his novels, we now see them made into facts. We find Lord Beaconsfield exercising the authority and influence of Prime Minister of England in order to carry forward his evident intention of degrading the rights of Parliament by stretching the prerogative of the Crown, and, in fact, of disturbing the equilibrium of the British constitution. Well,

now, it is in the foreign policy of this country that Lord Beaconsfield puts forward the claims of the Crown to have absolute control, and these claims have recently been put forward in a manner which shows they are seriously regarded. Indeed, we have seen in the Memoirs of the Prince Consort these claims of control over the foreign policy of the Government put forward in a variety of passages and on various occasions; while in a recent, and probably inspired, article in the Tory organ, the *Quarterly Review*, these claims have also been put forward, and you find them in various leading articles of the Tory press. And the Ministers themselves assume that position in regard to foreign policy. I dare say that you will recollect that about two years ago the Chancellor of the Exchequer, when speaking in Edinburgh, treated with contempt the criticism upon the foreign policy of the Government, because he said the people of this country did not understand foreign policy; and twelve months ago Lord Beaconsfield, in his speech at the Mansion House, talked of the Government of the world being carried on by "Sovereigns and statesmen." Well, gentlemen, what does all this mean? I will tell you what it means. It means that it is the object of these men to degrade the House of Commons to the level of a parochial vestry. It means that while we may pass turnpike bills, legislate upon water supply, discuss the valuation of property, decide upon weights and measures, and even pass an Act of Parliament upon threshing machines, we must not interfere with the great interests of the country involved in our foreign relationships. If you recollect, just before the last general election Mr. Disraeli visited Manchester; and in the Free Trade Hall he made a speech to a very much astonished audience, in which he said the policy of the Tory party was "*sanitas sanitatum, omnia sanitas*." We did not understand it then, but we understand it now. It means that while the House of Commons and Parliament may attend to sewage, we must leave to "Sovereigns and statesmen," upon the political Olympus, the government of the great affairs of the world. Well, now, gentlemen, in that grand assembly where the "Sovereigns and statesmen" of the world meet, presiding over an arcana into which we of the humbler and more vulgar sort are not permitted to enter, there sits a conspicuous figure, the Prime Minister of England, who, like an Olympian Jove, sends forth his thunders and lightnings all over the world. They are brilliant displays, but they are very disquieting, and somewhat dangerous, and moreover, they are very costly, and you have to pay the cost of all these displays, gentlemen. "Sovereigns and statesmen" in their great power, in their wisdom, in their benevolence, are willing to take charge of all your most important affairs; they will manage all the concerns in which you are deeply interested; they will do everything for you—except pay your taxes. That they won't do. You will have to pay these taxes; and the expenditure on account of this imperial policy has increased, is increasing, and will increase so long as the present Government remains in power. Now, I don't intend to dwell upon the expenditure to-night; but I must remind you that the expenditure in the year ending March last amounted to ten millions more than the amount of expenditure under Mr. Gladstone's administration; and I may remind you further, inasmuch

as it is the expenditure on the army and navy which is chiefly affected by this Imperial policy, that in the five years of Mr. Gladstone's Government the expenditure on the army and navy was 126 millions of money, while during the five years ending March last the Tory Government spent on the army and navy 143 millions of money, so that in these five years, upon the army and navy, the Tory Government, in carrying out this Imperial policy, had an excess of expenditure of seventeen millions. But that is not by any means all. During the current year there is also a considerable excess of expenditure for military and naval purposes beyond the average expenditure of Mr. Gladstone's Government; and then, in addition to that, there is the cost of the Zulu war and the cost of the Afghan war. I put all these items together as amounting to an additional eighteen millions, and I have no hesitation in saying that up to the present year the excess of expenditure over and above what would have been spent if Mr. Gladstone's Government had been in power will amount to no less a sum than thirty-five millions of pounds. Is it not preposterous that there should be an argument, that there should be a pretence, that a policy which involves so large an expenditure, and upon which that expenditure depends—is it not preposterous that we should be asked to give up our control of this foreign policy to the “sovereigns and statesmen” of the world? And, gentlemen, Lord Beaconsfield has acted upon this policy of withdrawing the foreign affairs of the kingdom from the control of the House of Commons, because, in point of fact, the Government have taken the various steps which they have taken during the last few years in regard to the foreign policy of the country—they have taken them under conditions which rendered it impossible for the House of Commons to control them. Let me remind you of one or two instances of this high-handed policy in which Lord Beaconsfield carried out, certainly with a vengeance, the exercise of “Divine dominion” and “the sacred rights of the sovereignty of the Crown.” I will just mention one or two cases. I will take first the Suez Canal shares. Parliament was not consulted about the purchase of the Suez Canal shares. Government bought a number of shares in the Suez Canal, for which they gave four millions—a very excessive sum, and one very much above the market value. They did it without first of all asking the consent of Parliament; and they employed a very respectable Jewish firm to raise this sum of four millions, and they paid that Jew an enormous commission for the transaction—they paid him £100,000 for doing what might have been done with scarcely any expenditure at all. That was the first step which the Government took in what I believe to be a meddling and muddling policy in Egypt, which has interfered with the British control of matters of Egyptian interest, and has brought us into a partnership with France which is very likely to lead to serious complications. Well, then, there is the island of Cyprus. Whether it is a good thing or a bad thing, whether it is what they professed it to be when they seized upon it, but which no one believes it to be—still, they took possession of the island of Cyprus under the prerogative of the Crown and without asking the consent of Parliament, and we are now ruling Cyprus under the royal prerogative. The House of Commons has no control over Cyprus. We have established there a despotic

Government; the Queen is represented by a Commissioner, and that Commissioner or Lieutenant-Governor has absolutely despotic powers—powers unknown in free England—powers only fit for a Government of the grossest form of despotism; because this Governor of Cyprus has the power of punishing people without trial, of gagging the press, and he has the power to do any other act of absolute dominion entirely without the control of Parliament. Well, now, in connection with the island of Cyprus, you know there was an Anglo-Turkish convention entered into between this country and Turkey, and in consideration of our having this worthless island of Cyprus we came under an obligation in that Anglo-Turkish Convention that we would maintain the Turkish dominions in Asia against any attack from any neighbour whatever. I say that for the Government of this country, without the consent of Parliament, to pawn the future resources, and, in fact, the future welfare of this country, by such a convention as that was about one of the most monstrous things which have happened of late years. It was a gross abuse of the treaty-making power of the Queen; and perhaps in this connection I may say that Mr. Gladstone has done me the great honour in Scotland of alluding to the course which I took in the House of Commons in regard to treaty-making powers, and I think that no one who reads that speech of Mr. Gladstone's with care but will see that the course which the Government must have taken in making this convention with Turkey without any possible opportunity of consulting beforehand the opinions of the country, has led Mr. Gladstone to feel that this power in the hands of such a Government is a dangerous power, and a power which we shall have, sooner or later, to consider how far it may be placed under restraint. Gentlemen, there was another action of royal prerogative—the right to make war, a most serious prerogative of the Crown; and I say that a Government who, under that prerogative of the Crown, declare war without, in the first instance, giving the Houses of Parliament an opportunity of expressing an opinion upon it, take upon themselves a most serious responsibility, and bring that prerogative of the Crown into great question. Nothing but the most serious emergency—and an emergency of a character which it is impossible for me to contemplate—could justify, in my judgment, a Government recommending or advising the Queen to declare war without, in the first instance, appealing to Parliament for their support and consulting Parliament upon the subject. But in the case of the Afghan war—a great national crime, a crime entailing upon this country, as I believe, great punishment now, and which will entail hereafter still greater punishment—that war was entered into by the Government without ever having given Parliament an opportunity of being consulted on the subject. Nay, more, for months, whilst they were preparing for that war, whilst they were leading up to that war, they intentionally deceived and hoodwinked Parliament in order that Parliament might not have an opportunity of expressing its opinion upon the policy of the Government. I will not dwell upon the Zulu war. The Government say it is not of their seeking. In fact, Lord Salisbury made one of his extraordinary statements that we were invaded by the Zulus. But I will say, in passing, this, that I think the Government, by trying to shirk the responsibility of the war

n Zululand, place themselves in this position, that while they condemn Sir Bartle Frere and say that he had no authority to engage in this cruel and wicked war, yet, if they did disapprove of his conduct, can you imagine for a moment that they would retain him in the position of High Commissioner, and the Governor-in-Chief of South Africa? It is quite clear that Sir Bartle Frere, in his despatches to the Government, gave them ample notice of the policy in which he wished them to engage; and yet they chose to keep him in that position; and therefore I say I cannot relieve the Government from the responsibility which they appear anxious to shirk. Perhaps one of the most extraordinary and unjustifiable exercises of the prerogative of the Queen consisted in the movement of the Indian troops to Europe. Now, in the case of the Indian troops which were brought to Europe last year the cost was defrayed, in the first instance, from the Indian Exchequer without the consent of Parliament, and in absolute violation of law; and then, not only did they break the law by charging the expenses of these troops upon the Indian Exchequer, but they violated the Bill of Rights, which forbids the keeping of a standing army without the consent of Parliament. Now, gentlemen, this gross and illegal exercise of the prerogative of the Crown in the movement of these Indian troops was strongly condemned by the Liberal party in the House of Commons. Amongst the rest Mr. Gladstone strongly condemned this illegal exercise of the prerogative of the Crown; and what did the Attorney-General do in reply? He sneered at us, and he said the people of this country were not particularly interested in this quibbling on constitutional rights; and he claimed that it was the prerogative of the Sovereign to move these people from India to Malta or anywhere else, leaving it to the Imperial Parliament, when they got there, subsequently to sanction the step which had been taken by voting the necessary supplies. Now, gentlemen, just bear in mind that if this is true law it comes to this, that the Government of this country may engage in a European war without the consent of Parliament, may bring one or two hundred thousand troops from India without the consent of Parliament, may pay them out of the Indian revenues without the consent of Parliament, and then, when the war is concluded, they may come to Parliament and ask them to sanction the repayment to the Indian exchequer of the money which had been so advanced out of the Indian funds. I say, if that is the true reading of the Constitution, then our noble forefathers who struggled for the rights of the people were grossly deceived. I say that our annual votes in the House of Commons, fixing the actual number of men to be maintained as a standing army under the Crown, which number of men is not to be exceeded—I say that is a mockery, a delusion, and a snare. I say further that if this is the true law of this country then we are living under a military monarchy, possessing high prerogative, and that we may just as well tear up the Bill of Rights at once. This is one of the grave issues which will be put before the country at the general election. We charge the Government with having violated the constitution of this realm, and we shall appeal to the people of this country whether it is not necessary that the exercise of the prerogative of the Crown shall be so restricted as to preserve the country from the daring

schemes and insatiable ambition of an unscrupulous Prime Minister. We shall appeal from the House of Commons, in which the majority have been false to the highest traditions of the British Constitution, and have been willing that the rights and privileges of the House of Commons shall be degraded at the bidding of the Prime Minister—we shall appeal from that majority of the House of Commons to the people who make the House of Commons—and we shall ask the people of this country whether they will support popular rights or Divine prerogative. There have been struggles of this kind before. There have been struggles between the prerogative of the Crown and the rights of the people in the days of our noble forefathers. Why, gentlemen, our forefathers hated the very name of prerogative, which had involved this country in serious dangers and disasters, and they struggled against it with all their might and main, and the result was this, that the prerogatives of the Crown were cut down; and I mistake very much the tempers of the people of this country if they will not now, when the issue is put before them, act in the same way. I say this is one of the issues which will have to be put before the country. But when is that issue to be taken? When is the dissolution to take place? I see in the newspapers of to-day that a neighbour of ours has been making a speech. I mean the member for Mid-Cheshire, the Hon. Wilbraham Egerton, who has been making a speech at a luncheon at Knutsford in connection with the consecration of certain portions of the parish Church. Well, now, Mr. Chairman, I wish to say this, before I allude to the remarks of the Hon. Wilbraham Egerton. Mr. Wilbraham Egerton, on the occasion of this luncheon connected with a service belonging to the Established Church, made a political speech. I protest, as a Churchman, against the disgrace and discredit of a man trying to turn a religious body of this country, the established body, into a means of political agitation. I say that for these gentlemen to go and try to make the Church of England into a political institution, supposing that by doing so they are serving the interests of the Church—I say I believe there is no surer way of pressing forward the disestablishment of the Church of England than the course taken by a number of these gentlemen who turn the Church of England into a mere political institution. I protest against it solemnly, and I say, that I, for one, whenever any such attempt is made, shall be ready both publicly and privately to say that it is contrary to the interests of that religious body. Mr. Wilbraham Egerton made this remark about the dissolution. He said that he scouted the demand for a dissolution, and intimated that it was not surprising that the Government should wish, as far as possible, before appealing to the country, to close the many transactions in which they had been engaged. Why, gentlemen, it seems to me, from our experience, that if we are to wait until they close the many transactions in which they have been engaged, we shall have to wait a very long time. Lord Beaconsfield, in his speech the other night at the Mansion House, said that the operations in Central Asia had met with signal success, and that the North Western frontier of India had been secured, and he also said that the war in South Africa had been concluded. Well, if what Lord Beaconsfield said were true,

these many transactions have come to a close ; but, unfortunately, these were some of the misleading statements of a speech which was full of fiction, from chemicals down to the imperious words of an unauthenticated Roman saying. These wars are not closed ; these many transactions are not closed ; nothing is settled anywhere ; wherever you look you find that there is a possibility that we may be exposed to a new difficulty and a new emergency. The Eastern question may break out at any moment. We were told by Lord Beaconsfield that we had concentrated Turkey ; and as Mr. Gladstone said, " Yes, we had concentrated Turkey as we concentrate a man by cutting his limbs off," and while we have cut off the limbs of Turkey, we have left the trunk corrupt and decayed. Armenia may become a second Bulgaria at any moment. In fact, if you noticed in the *Times* newspaper of last week, there was a most deplorable account of the state of Constantinople and of the state of Asia Minor. The Ministers of War and Marine, it was said in the *Times*, have their offices surrounded by crowds of starving women, the wives and widows of soldiers and sailors and other officials, begging for their arrears of pay. Asia Minor, we were likewise told, is a picture of desolation, with millions of acres lying idle and uncultivated. A traveller may go for miles upon miles, indeed, for hundreds of miles, through Asia Minor, and see on every hand this wild desolation—desolate because life and property are not safe. It is impossible that the country can be flourishing when it is under the heel of cruel Turkey. But it may happen that Armenia may rise up in revolution against Turkey. Don't you think it is likely ? Don't you think that any nation crushed down to the earth by a grinding despotism—men who have not their lives or the product of their industry safe, women who have not their honour safe—don't you think a country so crushed down by a despotic power, may possibly seek to gain its freedom by rising against its oppressors ? And if that takes place, we shall be told that Russia is intriguing, and we shall have this Anglo-Turkish Convention appealed to, that British blood and British money shall be spent in order to maintain Turkish despotism on the necks of struggling Christians. Are you willing that should continue ? Then there is Greece. In regard to Greece, at any moment there may be a spark which will kindle a conflagration in Epirus, Thessaly, and Crete. Lord Salisbury said at Manchester that the Government had followed the old traditions of foreign policy. They followed the bad traditions of our foreign policy, and they neglected the good traditions. The best traditions of the foreign policy of England centre around the independence of Greece. Greece, one of the most beautiful countries in the world, and associated as it is with recollections of an illustrious nation—Greece has been crushed down for four centuries by the power of Turkey ; and at length they struggled for freedom, and rather more than fifty years ago—about sixty years ago—that struggle was going on, and it received the sympathies of great numbers of the British nation. That struggle at length ended, and Greece achieved her independence ; and the Foreign Minister of this country, Mr. Canning, made use of the influence of England in order to secure the independence of Greece ; and if Mr. Canning had lived, Greece would not have only possessed the

portion of Europe which was then given to her, but she would have had Thessaly, Epirus, and Crete—territories inhabited by Greek populations. Unfortunately, Mr. Canning died, and he was succeeded by the Duke of Wellington, who, with that old Tory feeling of opposition to everything like rights and independence, refused to give these people the territories belonging to them; cramped Greece within the small limits assigned to it, kept out of it those important territories belonging to the Greek nation, and left them to suffer under the tyranny of Turkey. Well, gentlemen, ever since that time Greece has gone on flourishing; that is to say, that part of Greece which was made independent became prosperous. The other portions, which were left under Turkish rule, of course did not prosper; but during the last fifty years—during the last half century—I may just mention that the population of Greece has doubled. Her revenue has increased six-fold; she has re-built twenty-three old cities, and founded ten new towns; she has constructed 15 excellent harbours, extended cultivation throughout the country, educated the people, established a large mercantile navy and developed a large foreign trade, amounting to over six millions a year, the greatest part of which are transactions between this country and Greece. These are the results of our policy, limited as it was. What has happened since? Ever since, these outlying provinces of Greece, occupied by Greeks, have been struggling to be united to the kingdom of Greece. During the war between Turkey and Russia, Greece was prepared to enter into the fray in order to secure the independence of those Greek outlying provinces; but what did the Government do? They promised Greece that if she would hold her hand, if she would not interfere in this war and add to the difficulties of Turkey, they would give her claims their support at the close of the war. Greece stopped out of the war when she might have fought for her own interest, and, no doubt, compelled from Turkey the cession of those territories; and then when peace was concluded and the Berlin Congress was held, and the claims of the outlying territories of Greece had to be considered, France—the representative of France—was the great supporter of Greek liberties, while the representatives of England, meanly, dishonourably, to the discredit of their countrymen, were opposed to a full measure of liberty for Greece. They were opposed to the scheme for giving to Greece those outlying provinces; and the result of all of it was that a compromise was entered into, and a certain strip of territory in Thessaly and Epirus was granted to Greece on this understanding, that France recommended that there should be such a retrocession to Greece, but it was to be determined by an arrangement which was to be come to between Turkey and Greece as to the exact line of frontier. That was eighteen months ago, and nothing has been done since; Turkey has continually refused to recognise these claims, continually used all sorts of procrastination; and I see in the papers to-day that a Press correspondent states that there appears to be no satisfactory prospect whatever of a settlement of the Greek question. And in point of fact there is no prospect, and there will be no prospect, and probably the settlement of the Greek question will not come about until it is the result of some

further disturbance in the East ; and all this through the course taken by the British Government. If the British Government had supported France in claiming for the Greeks that fair measure of right and justice which she was entitled to, I have no hesitation in saying that the Greeks would have been satisfied, and so far the Eastern Question would have been placed probably on a basis which would have been likely to last. Is it not a disgrace to us that while the Slavs, who have been supported by Russia, should have received a very considerable measure of justice, the Greeks, all of whose sympathies go with England and not with Russia, should, in consequence of having relied on English promises and the English plenipotentiaries, have been deceived and cheated of their just rights. I say that it is impossible for us to look anywhere and consider that these questions which have been raised by the British Government are at all in course of settlement. My honourable friend has alluded to Afghanistan. Lord Beaconsfield in his Mansion House speech, said that by their proceedings in Afghanistan they had strengthened their position, that their operations had met with signal success, and that the North-Western frontier had been secured. Where is the North-Western frontier? Can any man tell me where that frontier is? What security have we in Afghanistan? How can we have strengthened our frontier in India by having to hold down by British bayonets millions of ferocious, warlike, and independent races, inhabiting a barren and rugged territory? At the present time there is a reign of terror going on in Cabul. You hear of men by the score hanged. Hanged for what? Not for murdering the Envoy whom you sent there contrary to the judgment of every wise and experienced man. No doubt those who were absolutely guilty of the murder of the Envoy deserved the punishment of guilt ; but that is not the case with those wretches who are now being hanged. They are hanged, perhaps, because they have not given up their arms—a nation writhing under the control of the invader. We are there, gentlemen, by no right of justice, we are there as invaders, and these men struggling for their liberty if they are found with arms in their hands are hanged. Men are being hanged on this pretence that they are rebels. Rebels, who to? Who are the rebels against in Afghanistan? We made a treaty with Yakoob Khan, and our Government lived for about a month in a Fool's Paradise. They thought the Afghanistan question had been all settled by this treaty with Yakoob Khan ; but that treaty has all disappeared, and Yakoob Khan is now a prisoner in the hands of the British. Where is the authority against which these men are rebelling? And yet we are hanging them. Ah, gentlemen, 40 years ago we passed through the same experience in Cabul. We occupied it 40 years ago, and we left in the minds of that people a feeling of hatred and revenge against the British name ; and we are now deepening and searing, as with a red hot iron, the same feeling of hatred and bitterness against us for our injustice. Do you think that we can attach this nation to us by conduct such as that? Is this the friendly, powerful and independent State, which has now been broken up by us into a number of separate hordes, all absolute opponents to English power? Then they say it is settled. Why, gentlemen, the moment you get to the out-

skirts of Afghanistan you get upon Persia, and already we are being told that Russia is intriguing with Persia, and that forsooth we must make Persia into a friendly, independent, and powerful State. Are we to go through the world with the British sword crushing and destroying independent nations in order to make them friendly? Are we, because of the phantom called "Russian intrigue," thus to bring down into disgrace and dishonour the high name of Great Britain? It is for you to say. You will have to give your voice and vote upon these great questions—the greatest issues which have ever been presented to the electoral body of this kingdom. I appeal to you. I know I shall not appeal in vain. I believe the people of Warrington will act as become men, as become British men, and as become Christians.

SPEECHES ON DOMESTIC QUESTIONS.

No. I.

*Annual Address to his Constituents in the Public Hall, Warrington,
Oct. 18, 1871.*

Ladies and gentlemen, this is the third occasion upon which I have had the honour and pleasure of appearing before you to give an account of my stewardship. On the two former occasions I had nothing but words of congratulation to offer. I was able to point to the work which the Liberal Government had done, and which, in my humble position as your representative, I had assisted them in doing, during these two sessions. That work was of a most important character. During the first session we passed the Irish Church Bill, a bill which, already, is bearing great fruit in Ireland in assuaging religious animosity and in making the large mass of the population feel that, at all events as far as their religious convictions are concerned, there is justice done to them. In the second session we passed that great measure, the Irish Land Bill, a bill which is also bearing great fruit. It is raising an independent, energetic, and industrious body of cultivators of the soil in Ireland, and I hope it gives a prospect that in the future Ireland shall take her proper place as the abode of industry and prosperity, side by side with our own country. I have no doubt whatever that the effect of that important act will be that the cultivators of the soil, no longer held under the grinding foot of an absentee aristocracy, will feel that they are able to employ their capital in the cultivation of the soil with confidence, and will feel that they can act as citizens of this great empire without experiencing that sensation of slavery which, to a very great extent, existed before the passing of that great measure. Gentlemen, in the session of 1870, in addition to that important Irish measure, we passed the Education Bill. I shall not dwell upon that Bill further than to say that, although there may be some difference of opinion as to some of the provisions of that measure, yet, at all events, we may say this, that it does give a great prospect that every man shall hereafter have far better means of education for his children in the future than have been in existence in the past, and you may rely upon it that although there may be in connection with that educational instrumentality perhaps something that some of us do not entirely approve of, yet, if we can get an educated people we shall get a free people, and no educated people can long submit to any laws that are either despotic or injurious to their interests. In the session of 1869

and 1870 we also had the pleasure of making great reductions in the expenditure of this country ; and in my speeches to you I had the satisfaction of being able to give to Mr. Gladstone full praise for these great reductions of expenditure. These reductions enabled the Government to make correspondingly a great reduction in the taxation of the country, and I wish to call the attention of the meeting for a moment to what taxes we repealed during those two sessions. In 1869 we removed the remaining 1s. duty from corn. That produced £900,000 a year—taxes which raised the price of bread to a certain extent throughout the country—and it was the last remnant of the corn laws. We repealed the fire insurance duty, which raised a million a year, and which tended to prevent that providence which all men should exercise in relation to their property. We also reduced the assessed taxes to the amount of a million, and we took 1d. off the income tax, which was equivalent to a million and a half. In 1870 we reduced the sugar duty one half, which amounted to £2,750,000 ; and this was a great boon to every consumer in the kingdom, and that means everybody. We also took another 1d. off the income tax, making another million and a half, and we reduced the excise and stamp duties, amounting to £350,000. In these two years we actually reduced taxes to the amount of £9,000,000 a year. Now what Tory Government can say that they ever did the same thing in the same time ? I am quite aware that it will be said, and no doubt with truth, that Mr. Lowe, with great ingenuity, anticipated the payment of certain taxes in one year, and by the levying of direct taxes in a particular manner had the advantage of a certain additional sum of money in a given year ; but the Liberal Government had to make up more than £4,000,000 that was due on the account of the Abyssinian war—a legacy left to them by their Tory predecessors,—and they paid that out of the taxes of the country, besides reducing the taxes to the extent that I have named. Now, I am anxious that this should be well understood, because our Tory friends, who are never economical themselves, no doubt intend to try to make great capital out of the fact that during the last session we have certainly been spending too much money, and the Government have had to increase the income tax twopence in the pound. Now, what I want to show you is this, that the income tax, although increased twopence in the pound, only stands at the same amount that it stood at in the time of the Derby-Disraeli Government. They levied a sixpenny income tax, and the present Government is doing the same, so that we are not worse off as regards the income tax, and we are enjoying the benefit of a reduction of six millions in the taxes of the country. In addition to that, the national debt during the last three years has been reduced by ten millions sterling, which is rather a large sum to have paid during three years, especially when we take into consideration that such payment has been accompanied by so large a reduction of the taxation of the country. Well, now, I think it is only fair that we should give to our distinguished leader, Mr. Gladstone, and to his Government, the full credit of what they have done. I say this with all the more cheerfulness and confidence because, at all events, for the great increase of expenditure of the last session, I feel that I am in no way responsible ; but in the House of Commons I reminded Mr.

Gladstone of the words that he gave utterance to upon this platform. I did not hesitate to express my opinion very strongly against the policy of the Government ; but whilst I am prepared to do my utmost to check the Government in what I think to be wrong, I think it is only fair that we should recognise what they have done that is right, and that we should remember, at all events, that they have done a great deal more within the last three years than any Tory Government has done, or will be likely to do, within the same time. I say that the great increase of expenditure last year has been a great mistake. It commenced in August, last year, in the midst of the war between France and Prussia. That first vote of 20,000 men and two millions of money was the first wrong step, and on that wrong step the whole of the subsequent mistakes—as I consider them to be—of the Government have followed. Well, I was one of the seven who opposed that vote, and no one can have read the speech that Mr. Gladstone made a short time ago at Whitby without seeing that he knew that it was a mistake. I know that he is convinced that it was a mistake. He talked at Whitby of alarmism. There no doubt was a great amount of foolish alarmism at the end of last year. We saw in the House of Commons one member after another get up and urge the Government to do something to defend the country. Against what? Why, from my youth upwards—and I daresay that has been the case with you—we have always had a French bugbear in our minds, and we have been told that we must protect ourselves against France ; but France had quite enough to do at that time. There was no chance of her attacking us when she had to cope with that great power of Germany, and I ventured to urge upon the Government last year, both publicly and privately, that they should not take a step which might involve them in any unnecessary expenditure. But they did take that step, and this year they followed it up, and that is the real origin of the great additional expenditure of the past session. Now, I wish to point out to you very strongly, that there may be no mistake about it, that this expenditure was not for the abolition of purchase, because that this year will only have cost about £600,000, whereas our additional expenditure during the year is upwards of £3,000,000. It was for the increase of the army—for expenses connected with the army ; it was for guns, rifles, powder, and military stores, and, of course, to pay for the additional 20,000 men. The result is that we find ourselves paying this year nearly £17,000,000 for our army, whereas, in 1830, the entire expenditure of this country—leaving out the cost of the national debt—for the army, navy, and civil service amounted only to £18,000,000 per year. So that we are now spending for the army alone within one million of what sufficed during the Wellington-Peel administration of 1830 to pay for the whole service and expenditure of the country. Well, now, gentlemen, that is rather a serious thing, and the only way to stop it—and it will go on if you do not stop it—is for the public to awake up to its own interests, and to call upon the members of Parliament to be in their places, and to use their influence against the continuance of this great expenditure. Allow me here to make a personal remark. We have heard lately of members of Parliament, or of a certain member, at all events, staying in the House of Commons until

the small hours of the morning in order to defend the interests of the brewers and licensed victuallers. I may say that I stayed in the House until the small hours of the morning in order to defend the interests of the public at large. I protested against their votes, and divided the House against them. Of course I was in a minority, and I noticed that the London correspondent of a Tory paper published in a neighbouring town of this county made very merry at my expense, saying that I had been keeping the House together until very late hours in the night, or rather, early in the morning, and that I had been defeated in the division by a large majority. But what I did, told ; and I have the best information—the very best information—upon which I can assure that when the Government meet Parliament next year, they will come before the House of Commons with a reduction—a very large reduction—of expenditure, amounting to some millions. It is quite true that in opposing the expenditure I was defeated ; but the Government know that there is a public out of doors watching what is going on indoors ; and that public opinion is not to be gauged by the number of men, who, very early in the morning, when the House is wearied, are prepared to vote against the Government of the day ; and they know—and that is what checks the expenditure very much—the public departments know that there are those in the House who will rouse the attention of the country to any unnecessary expenditure ; and knowing this they begin to try if they cannot see their way to reduce it. I have already said, and I say it with some confidence, from the source whence I have gained my information, that I believe the Government are alive to the fact that they did make a mistake in going into that large expenditure, and that next year they will try to remedy the mistake by making a very considerable reduction. It was, in fact, the blot of the session. It was the origin of Mr. Lowe's budget. Had Mr. Lowe, as he had in former years, had a surplus to deal with he would have had no difficulty, but when he had to find means for this increase of expenditure he tumbled over into a series of blunders. The first budget he brought forward was one which was entirely discreditable to him. It was his own budget ; it was not the budget of the Government, except that they had adopted it. They knew no more about the budget than I did two days before it was brought into the House. It was decided upon at a Cabinet Council on the Wednesday, and brought before the House on the Thursday. They trusted to Mr. Lowe. I can only say, so far as my own experience of Mr. Lowe goes, I should be very glad individually if the Government would treat him, as the seamen in a celebrated vessel treated a certain gentleman named Jonah, if they would get rid of Mr. Lowe from the Cabinet. Well, he proposed in his budget to deal with the succession duty, but not boldly. He did not deal with it by putting on real property, as he ought to have done, an equal amount of taxation to that borne by personalty. He dealt with it in a manner which was most unsatisfactory. Then he brought forward his match tax—a tax upon industry ; one of those taxes which I thought we had got rid of a century ago. For the Government to bring forward the match tax, was to oppose an interference with the industry of some of the poorest

children and people in London, and which would interfere with that branch of industry, and interfere very much with the export of matches; and to that extent would interfere with the trade of the country. I think it was altogether a retrograde step. I considered it as an independent member, and I determined to oppose this budget, and with a most excellent friend of mine—a man for whom I have high respect and esteem; a man who for many years has been in the House of Commons—I mean Mr. James White, the member for Brighton, I arranged with him the terms of a motion to be brought before the House of Commons. The terms of the motion were these—"That in the opinion of this House the additional taxation proposed by her Majesty's Government will entail burdens upon the people which are not justified by existing circumstances." I seconded Mr. White's motion, and in the course of the speech I then delivered—and which you have probably read in the local papers—I criticised very strongly the arguments which Mr. Lowe had brought forward in his Budget speech in favour of the budget which he had introduced. Gentlemen, I will make a confession to you. Of course, I did not want to upset the Government; you know perfectly well that I have a great regard for the Government, and for Mr. Gladstone, the head of it. My object was to make the Government feel that the budget did not give satisfaction, and I did not see how we could have replaced them with better men than we have at the present moment. Therefore I did not want to displace the Government, but what I wanted was this—to draw up a resolution that would secure the support of a large number of the Liberal party, so as to give the Government an intimation that the policy they were pursuing was one that was unsatisfactory to us. Judge of my surprise when, on the night we were bringing forward the motion, we found that the Tories were all going to vote for us, and that Mr. Disraeli intended to speak for us. I was told by one Tory member after another that I met in the lobby—"I am going to vote for your resolution," and I began to consider that that was rather unfortunate. But at the same time, although I thought it was unfortunate that many of the Tory members—I will make a few exceptions, because there were members amongst the Tory party who were prepared to vote because they disapproved of the increased expenditure to a great extent—should support the motion for factious purposes, still I remembered what Mr. Cobden had said in 1862, when the Tories, in the same way, were prepared to support a motion brought forward by a Liberal member. He said—"It matters nothing who supports this motion, because I think it right that we should support what we believe to be true." I went on with the motion, along with my friend Mr. White, and some Liberal members—very judiciously, I think, under the circumstances—when they saw how matters were going, voted the other way. The end of it was, that we did exactly what we wanted; we ran the Government so close that it made it desperately unpleasant to them, and yet we did not turn them out. But we did this—we settled the budget; we knocked it in the head, and in the course of a day or two Mr. Lowe was obliged to withdraw the budget which he had proposed, and to bring in another. The second budget was a very simple one. Had Mr. Lowe come down to the House, as I hoped he

would have done, and said the Government were prepared to reduce the expenditure—their estimates—that would have been a more satisfactory thing. But they did not. The Government proposed to lay a twopenny income tax to keep up the expenditure. When this proposal was made—to raise the income tax by 2d. in the £—it raised a question in the House which was very seriously debated. Mr. Disraeli objected to this addition of 2d. to the income tax—although, mark you, his own Government imposed a sixpenny income tax—on this ground, that if they put a further amount of direct taxation upon the country, they would destroy that equilibrium that ought to exist between direct and indirect taxation, and he claimed that real property ought not to be taxed to any greater extent ; but that any addition of taxation should be imposed in such a way as might press upon other parts of the community. Well, that argument was used in the House of Commons, and it was said that direct and indirect taxation should go hand in hand, and that when you put on taxation you should put on a certain proportion of direct and indirect taxation ; and that when you took off taxation, you should in the same way take off a certain proportion of direct and indirect taxation. I want you to consider this, because it is a most important matter for you working men. I went entirely against that view of the case. I wish you to remember that indirect taxes, which are raised in the form of custom and excise duties, are taxes really upon industry, and they are paid for, in the most part, out of the wages of labour, and not out of realised capital. It is quite true that you don't see the tax-gatherer. You pay these custom and excise duties, and except that at some time you may meet a man in the street, who, you are told, is an exciseman, practically you don't see the tax-gatherer. You pay these taxes over the counter when you are buying tea, and coffee, and sugar, and tobacco, or any other thing you buy over the counter from the tradesman, who is really the tax-gatherer. The worst of it is this—that not only do you pay taxes, but a great deal more than the taxes. If there is a tax of 6d. in the £ upon tea, you pay not only 6d. in the £ to your grocer, but the grocer has to buy that tea from the dealer, and the dealer from the merchant, and the merchant perhaps from another merchant who takes it out of bond, and who pays the Government tax ; and he does not content himself by simply charging upon his customer the amount of the taxes, but for his trouble in getting this tea out of bond, for the risk in paying 6d. a pound, and the profit upon the money he has advanced for Government duty ; so that the result is—instead of your having to pay 6d., you probably pay 2d. in addition ; and thus, instead of having tea duties raising a certain amount which goes to the State, you have also taken out of your pockets an extra one or two millions which the State never receives. Therefore it is a very objectionable way of raising taxes in this country—that there should be indirect taxes which are not taken cleanly out of the pocket of the people, but which lead to an additional charge which is, of course, a burden upon the people without being a benefit to the State. Well, now, there is another addition which makes this thing still worse. If we pay indirect taxes upon any commodity, we raise the prices, and if we raise the price we lessen the consumption of it. People drink less or eat less of it in

consequence of the higher price, but what does that mean? We import less of these articles from other countries, and we have less calico and iron to send out to pay for them. So that in fact you see the raising of money by indirect taxation not only imposes undue burdens upon the pockets of the working classes, but by checking the trade of the country it will actually lessen the value of labour, because it reduces the demand for the products of their industry. On that account I am against indirect taxation, and in favour of direct taxation, as far as its principles can possibly be carried out. But Mr. Disraeli said that the equilibrium would be disturbed, and contended that landowners would be over-taxed if direct taxation were carried out. Well, I know something of the House of Commons at the present, and I can assure you that landowners are not likely to be over-taxed by Parliament. I dare say the House of Commons is better than it was, and an improvement upon former Houses, but you may rely upon it that former Houses of Commons have taken very great care not to over-tax the owners of real property. I recollect hearing a remark made before the repeal of the Corn Laws, that if a being were to come down from another sphere and look over our statute book, he would find out from the condition of the statute book that the Government of this country was in the hands of the landowners, because the statute book was so arranged in every way as to promote their interests. But I entirely deny the fact, as regards this equilibrium between direct and indirect taxation, that at the present moment we impose in indirect taxation a less proportionate amount, and upon real property a greater amount, than we did 20 years ago. It is quite true we have taken off during the last 20 to 30 years no less than £20,000,000 of import duties. We have repealed the corn laws, and we have reduced the duty upon sugar and tea, and a great number of articles that the people consume, and to that extent we have relieved commerce and industry of this country by taking off £20,000,000 a year of taxation. But what is the fact? Notwithstanding that we have reduced all these import duties upon the food of the people, I find that while in 1840 there were thirty-eight millions of customs and excise duties paid by this country, at the present moment there are no less than forty-three millions of customs and excise duties paid by the people of England. Therefore, it must be remembered that although we have reduced a large number of duties, the people who consume these articles do really pay a larger sum of money in indirect taxation than they did thirty years ago. How is this? It is simply because the people eat more and drink more, and have more of the enjoyments and comforts of this life. And although the duties upon these articles have been reduced, yet as the people consume more of them, as a matter of course the effect of it is that the duties upon the articles being consumed in such large quantities help to bring up these large amounts, and the people are all the better off. I remember very well that when advocating the repeal of the Corn Laws, the arguments used by our opponents were—that the people had enough corn, nobody being short; that they had enough beef, and cheese, and sugar, and tea, and it was contended that the import duties did not interfere with the comforts of the people. What is the fact? It is this. In consequence of

the reduction of duties, and in some cases the repeal of duties, every article of consumption has been very much increased, not alone in the aggregate, because you must consider that there is a larger population than there was ; but taking per head of the population, there was an actual increase during the last 30 years. I will take two or three of them. For instance, in 1840 the amount of corn consumed per head of the population of this country was $42\frac{1}{2}$ lbs. That had actually increased in 1869 to $156\frac{1}{2}$ lbs. per head of the population. The number of imported eggs consumed by the population increased four fold. But I will take sugar, which is a most important item. I find that in 1840 the amount of sugar consumed per head of the population was rather over 15 lbs., and in 1869 it had increased to 39 lbs. In the same way the consumption of tea had also increased from $1\frac{1}{4}$ lbs. to nearly $3\frac{3}{4}$ lbs. per head. I might go through the whole list of the items of articles which are imported into this country ; I might take cattle and all sorts of articles that are consumed by the people, and I should be able to show, from the returns I hold in my hand, that the condition of the inhabitants was infinitely improved by the fact that these interferences of import and foreign commodities had been removed. I know perfectly well that people say that sixpence a pound on tea does not matter ; that it is not felt ; that it would not produce any effect at all, but I hold a return which shows what was the effect of the reduction of the duty from 1s. to 6d., which is just the reduction that I contend ought to be made in reference to the other sixpence. I find that when the duty was one shilling, the total amount of tea consumed per head was under 3 lbs.—only $2\frac{1}{2}$ lbs., that was in 1863 ; and four years afterwards, in consequence of the reduction to 6d., the amount of tea consumed per head was not less than $3\frac{3}{4}$ lbs., so you see that the reduction of 6d. had such an effect upon the general price of tea that it led to additional consumption. It was not only that tea was cheaper, but the trade of this country was increased. I also hold in my hand a return which shows that while in 1852 our exports to China only amounted to two and a half millions, in consequence of the gradual reduction of the duty on tea, our exports in 1867 had actually increased to seven and a half millions. What do seven and a half millions represent ? Calico, which represents employment and industry, and therefore it represents the well-being of the working classes of the country. I shall not dwell upon this matter, because my time will not permit me to do so, but I can assure you that all the returns prove that every successive reduction of indirect taxation has had the effect of increasing the consumption of the commodities by the people of this country, and at the same time has had the effect of extending to a great degree the trade of the country. But I am prepared to meet these gentlemen upon another point—upon other statistics of the best authority, in reference to this equilibrium of taxation, when they say that in consequence of the reduction of the indirect taxation real property is unfairly treated. In 1843 out of every £100 raised in taxation £13 5s. was paid by real property, against £86 15s. paid by taxes not upon real property, and in 1868 and 1869, before the income tax was increased 2d. in the pound, the amount paid by real property was only £10 10s. in every £100, whilst other taxes produced no less

than £89 10s. So that you see that the proportion was actually greater in 1869 against labour and industry than it was 30 years ago, before this change had taken place in the import duties. Now I may also mention, just in passing, that in England the taxes upon real property are far less than in any other country in Europe. There is no country in Europe that does not raise a larger proportion of its revenue upon real property than we do in England. Therefore upon that ground, I say that these gentlemen who complain that we have been wrong in charging real property, are not justified by the facts of the case. But they have raised the question, and it ought to be carried out. I say that not only is land not too much taxed, but I say it is too little taxed. It is supposed that the income from trades, professions, and industry—the wages of labour—really amount to about the same sum of money per year as the amount of money received by land and real property; and it is held, therefore, that labour should pay an amount of taxation equivalent to the amount levied upon real property. Well, I shall dismiss real property for the moment, and I will take simply land. I wish to point out that land is held in a way which is peculiar. How is it that men possess any land at all? Where does it come from? They did not make it. The man who sells his labour works his nine to ten hours per day, carries his labour to his employer and sells it, but where does this land come from? Well, if you look back you will find that the original possessors of the soil of this country had possession of the soil by that old-fashioned law that power and might gave right. The most powerful man in the country, the chief, became the king of the nation, and he held nominally the whole of the land of the country. But he did not hold it without duty. He held it subject to certain obligations, and one great obligation was this, that he must defend the country, and that that power by means of which he had taken possession of all the acres of the country, should at all events defend itself; and when he gave this land to his nobles, the mighty men of valour, who then existed, he said he would give the land to them on one condition only, namely, that they should join him in the defence of the country, and underneath the idea of property lies that great fact that all the land of this country is subject to the obligation to maintain the defence of the country. And I say that in that respect I am a Tory. I stand upon the lines of the constitution. I go back to times of great antiquity, and I look at the conditions under which land is held, and I claim that these conditions shall now be observed, and that those who hold the land shall perform the obligations attached to it, and that if needs be, they shall find the money for the defence of the country. It was so for centuries. Generation followed generation, and the monarchs of this country and their nobles recognised the right, and did find the means for defending the country. When at length the nobles found that the middle classes and the industrial classes had more money than they used to have, and were creating towns, and were getting an independent existence, and were acquiring property apart from land, the nobles, who had possession of the two Houses of Parliament, entered into a great scheme, and proposed to exchange this feudal tenure—this claim that the king had upon them to find means to defend the country—they pro-

posed to exchange this for what? Do you suppose they bought up the land, and enfranchised it by money out of their own pockets? Nothing of the sort. They gave to the king of the time an excise duty of 1s. 3d. upon every gallon of beer, that is to say they commenced a system of excise, and instead of retaining their obligation they threw it upon the people. Subsequently to that, there was a land tax established, and that land tax is a matter that ought to and must come out. That tax which was imposed in the reign of William the Third at 4s. in the pound, for the purpose of maintaining the obligations of the State, more particularly, no doubt, in reference to the maintenance of the army and the various forces of the kingdom,—that land tax produced one-fourth of the entire revenue of the kingdom. How much do you suppose it produces now? One-fortieth. It does not even produce that if you take into account all the sources of the revenue. The land tax of 4s. in the pound was assessed upon the value of the property at that day. The value of property at that time was insignificant compared with its value now; but those landowners who held both Houses of Parliament decided that in relation to the land tax, the land should never be held to have increased at all; so that this 4s. is not charged upon the value of the land at the present time, but upon the small, insignificant value which existed many years ago. If 4s. in the pound was charged, it would bring in, at the present rental, something like £16,000,000 per year; and I am disposed to think that it should bring in £16,000,000 per year, and it would only be a proper fulfilment of the obligation imposed upon it. About the end of the last century it was proposed to pay a legacy duty upon succession to property. Mr. Pitt brought forward that legacy duty, and he proposed to impose the same duty upon all kinds of property, which would have been perfectly fair, but when his bill came before Parliament, the landowners, who monopolised both houses of the legislature, divided his bill into two parts, and they imposed the legacy and probate duties upon personal property, the savings that men might have gathered in trade or by their industry; and they let the land off free. It is within the memory of all of us—in fact, it is only within a few years—that a small attempt at justice has been made in reference to it. A certain amount of taxation has been imposed by means of a succession duty on land, but I may mention to you that up to a year or two ago the total amount of money paid to the State in probate and legacy duties upon the hard-earned gains of industry and trade, and upon personal property, amounted to no less a sum than £135,659,675, while the succession duties, the charge on land—land that has been made the most valuable in the world—amounted to under ten millions sterling. Ah! let those landowners challenge an enquiry into the taxation upon land, and I think they will find, so far from the equilibrium being in their favour, the balance is entirely on the other side; and that we shall have to do something to make up for that which has not been done in former years, and that the land will have to bear the obligation which rightly belongs to it. But, gentlemen—and here I want to draw your attention to a most important fact, and it is this, that if the country, in its legislation, and in its taxation, adopts wise and just measures, those measures always lead to the benefit of the whole

community. If we look back at the past, we shall find that the measures we have taken hitherto, in the interests of the public at large, although they seemed to be against the interest of the landed class, and have been opposed by the landed class, so far from injuring owners of real property, they have benefited them. The fact is you cannot increase the trade of the country—you cannot increase the prosperity of the working classes, without, at the same time, increasing the value of the land and real property. I have got a return, from which it appears that during the last twenty years, during which there have been all these remissions of taxation, as it was alleged, in the interests of industry, the value of land has increased nearly £6,000,000 in annual rental; the value of houses, £33,000,000 annual rental; and other property, including railways, £20,000,000; making a total increase in twenty years of no less a sum than £60,000,000, which, calculated at 25 years' purchase, would represent a property of no less a sum than £1,500,000,000, or double the amount of the national debt. Do not let the landowners suppose we are advocating anything against their interests. I say, "Be just and fear not." Give every scope to the industry of the country, and you will not only cast happiness broadcast over the land, but you will improve in the long run the value of your own property. I have trespassed at some length upon this particular point, because this policy which I have been advocating is the policy of Richard Cobden. I call myself a disciple of Richard Cobden, and in the House of Commons I want to see his policy carried out still further. I want to see it carried out in the reduction of expenditure, in the reduction of indirect taxation, and in the extension of the principles of free trade; and sure I am that if that policy is so carried out, and if, as the first instalment, we get a "free breakfast table"—free sugar, free tea, free coffee—you may rely upon it there will be another impetus given to the industry of this country, and an addition to the value of all property within the realm. I venture to say that that has been the key of the course that I have taken in the House of Commons hitherto, a course I shall venture, in your name, to take in the future. But, gentlemen, I must hurry on to say that although the last session of Parliament has been called a barren one, I do not admit it was a barren one. I know that the Tories, who did their best to obstruct the business in a most remarkable manner, and did prevent some very important measures being passed, are casting a slur upon the Government by asserting that Parliament has done nothing during the past session. But they did something; they did a great thing, as I hope it will prove, in the abolition of purchase in the army. When you remember what the officers in the army were; when you remember that promotion in the army depended upon the length of a man's purse; that a man, to be an officer in the army, need not show either ability or fitness for his position; that the army was simply a lounge for the younger sons of the aristocracy and wealthier classes of society; I say if, by the abolition of purchase, we can change all this, we have done a great work. I may mention in passing that I think the terms given to the officers of the army were too good. The Government not only proposed to give them the actual amount they had paid, in accordance with the

Queen's Regulation Warrant, but also proposed to give them a very large amount—upwards of £3,000,000—to compensate them for the money they had paid for their commissions over the regulation prices fixed by the Queen's Warrant, and contrary to law. I have the satisfaction to know that in the House of Commons on several occasions I opposed that motion. I have the satisfaction of knowing that I divided the House upon the subject, and although I was, of course, defeated in a House in which there was so much interest on the other side, yet I know it was felt by the Government, and by many members of the House of Commons, that I was right in opposing this transaction, which I considered to be in every respect an unjust arrangement towards the people of this country. I did my best to prevent what I considered to be an injustice to the taxpayers of this country. But purchase is abolished, and it is the means to an end. What we want now is military organisation without favouritism, and the people of this country, who pay this large sum of money to abolish purchase, must look sharp after the authority of the Horse Guards if they want to have full value for it. I have no confidence—and I tell you freely and frankly—in the Duke of Cambridge. I not only venture to say that in this hall, but I said it in the House of Commons. I told the members of the House of Commons that I feel sure the people of this country would look with great jealousy on the patronage of the army if placed in the hands of the Duke of Cambridge. When we have got an army in such a state that even its friends admitted that it is thoroughly inefficient; and when we have the most expensive army in the world managed in a manner that is admitted to be a disgrace, we ask—who is responsible for it? Are we to be told that the Duke of Cambridge, the Commander-in-Chief, is not to be held responsible? I say he is to be held responsible for it. The whole of his career proves that he is opposed to army reform. Every proposal that was made for reforming the army met with opposition from the Duke of Cambridge. Even flogging in the army he was the man to support, and he used his influence to maintain it. If that is the case, and knowing, as I do, that he must necessarily be beset by a large amount of personal connections and influences, I have no confidence in the patronage of the Duke of Cambridge. If the scheme fails it will fail because of the management at headquarters. We have this satisfaction—we have got rid of the power of money in the army, and I am told that the commissions in the army are to be thrown open to general competition. We shall get rid at all events of the aristocratic leaven in the army, and I expect we shall look to our officers not only to receive the money of the State, and the honours of the State, but we shall expect them to do the work of the State. In that view I hope we shall have less of them. We have still too many. I am afraid of trespassing upon your time, but I think you ought to know that if officers of the army can protect this country, we are in no danger whatever. According to the army list of 1871, we have four field marshals, 76 generals, 148 lieutenant-generals, of whom 20 are retired on full pay, and three on half pay; 401 major generals, of whom 129 are retired on full pay, five on half pay, and three without progressive pay, or allowance. We have, therefore, 614 general officers, 944 colonels, and

1,007 lieutenant-colonels, making a total of 1,951 colonels and lieutenant-colonels, and 1,018 majors. So that, in fact, if we had, say 110 regiments, we could man two regiments with general officers and colonels, besides a lot of majors and a great superabundance of captains. What we want is, fewer officers, and to make officers of the army know their business, to do their business, and not to make the army simply a fashionable lounge. Well, we not only dealt with the army, but we dealt with University Tests. I shall not dwell upon that question, except to say that the University Tests Bill we passed last year is another step in the direction of religious liberty. It did not go quite far enough, and I hope to see the day when the property of the Universities will be still further applied to religious denominations. It was an important step, and I voted for it, as I also did for the disestablishment of the English Church. When the time comes, I have no doubt but that I shall have an opportunity of speaking upon that question, and I think that I shall be able to show reasons even to earnest Churchmen that in giving that vote I gave no vote which was against the true interests of the Church. It was certainly in accordance in every way with what I consider to be the true principles of religious liberty. Amongst the Bills we did not pass was the Ballot and the Licensing Bills. I won't dwell upon the Ballot Bill. I believe we shall have a meeting on the 29th November, and, I have reason to hope, my hon. friend Mr. Jacob Bright will give us his presence on that occasion. And then we will talk about the Ballot, and I won't dwell upon it now. You know I have a very strong feeling in favour of the Ballot, and of course I did what I could in favour of it, but we were opposed in a most remarkable manner by the leading Conservative members, who made a multitude of speeches of a most singular character with the object of throwing over the Ballot Bill sufficiently late to give the Lords an excuse to refuse to pass the measure. However, I am told upon good authority, we shall proceed with the Ballot the first thing next session, and we will send it to the Lords in time enough to give them no excuse for throwing it out, and I don't believe they will. If they do, I imagine they will give another very strong reason to the people of this country to consider whether it will be desirable to take notice of the fact that a co-ordinate branch of the Legislature sit in a gilded chamber, simply because they happen to be the sons of their fathers. I shall just for a moment allude to the licensing question. Now, I give credit to the Government for having attempted to deal with that question, and if they had gone to a second reading I should have voted for Mr. Bruce's Bill. But I said in the House of Commons, as I also said privately to Mr. Bruce, that there were provisions in the Bill which I entirely disapproved of. I entirely disapproved of the ten years' clause. I think it was an unreasonable thing in every point of view. I think, in fact, it gave to each beer-house and public-house in the country a vested interest, which I don't believe, under the present law, they possess. I also objected to the proposal to put licenses up to auction at the end of ten years. I think it is altogether an objectionable thing. It was said there might be in a particular locality a house respectably conducted, and held from father to son, and it would give the man who had it no better chance

than one who had conducted his house in a most disgraceful manner. I therefore objected to the system altogether. It was what I ventured to call a new-fangled system of legislation. I also objected to men going about in plain clothes and getting convictions. I dislike the spy system. On these several grounds I objected to the Bill, but if it had gone into committee we should have tried to amend it. It seems to me in reference to this licensing reform, that there are one or two very simple principles. What we all want is to reduce the number of houses. We know that there are too many for the population. We want to close the worst class of houses,—the lowest in value and the lowest in conduct; and we want to put difficulties in the way of new houses being licensed. We did that by the Suspensory Bill this session, but I wish to go further. I want the ratepayers of every locality to have a voice in the extension of the licensing system. Well, now, that is the cardinal principle of the Permissive Bill—but it is not the Permissive Bill. I have never disguised my opinions of that Bill. I have always said that I think that the Alliance movement is one of the greatest and most valuable movements of the day. I think that the Alliance men have done more than any other body of men to concentrate public opinion upon the necessity of a reform of the licensing system. There is a principle involved in the Permissive Bill—the principle of ratepayers' control—that I think is a good principle. If you divide this town into licensing districts you may trust the ratepayers of the different districts to say whether they would have additional public houses or not. I say you ought to give them that privilege, and I would give more power to the ratepayers in relation to this matter. I am not advocating any extraordinary or revolutionary change. I dare say that some of you think I am not prepared to go fast enough. What I want is to see an immediate change for the better, and at the same time I do not want to create a great amount of opposition—natural opposition—on the part of those who are interested. I want to deal as well as I can in the direction of getting rid of a great evil, and, at the same time, not to do it in such a way as would create a convulsion in the public mind, or to be too far ahead of public opinion. Let us go on quietly but surely. You will always find that, as I have in the House of Commons done my best to support restrictions upon this traffic, I shall continue to do so; and I hope that you will consider that in the course that I take in the House of Commons I shall seek to take such steps as may not be unduly harsh to any class of the community, whilst, at the same time, I am deeply convinced that it is most important that as soon as possible, and by every means in our power, we should stamp out one of the greatest evils that afflict our population, and without which, if we could get a sober population, we should, I believe, be the most powerful, most industrial, and best educated people on the face of the earth. Will you excuse me if I just allude for a few moments to one other question, and I find I shall be obliged to omit very much of what I intended to say? But there is one question rising up of such great importance that I am bound on this occasion to make a short allusion to it, although I shall hope, on some other occasion, to speak upon it at greater length. It is the land question. Now, that is a question which is evidently rising up

into public notice. We shall have a number of crude schemes in reference to the land which I daresay will be discussed, and which will probably be thrown aside. One scheme already suggested has been that the State should buy all the land in the country, and that it should work it, and let it out in some way or other. I venture to say from my knowledge of the management of State affairs that if you adopt any such system as that—if it were practicable—you would create such an amount of jobbery and waste and difficulty of all kinds that the country, so far from being a gainer, would be a very great loser. But the land question cannot remain as it is. We cannot see the land of this country held as it is, in many cases, in such large quantities without knowing that any owner of a county, and an owner of land bringing in £300,000 or £400,000 a year cannot do his duty to it. The very existence of men holding these large properties is an interference with the natural advantages of the people of this country. I don't want, by any stringent law, to interfere with them, but what I claim is, that the laws of this country should not assist men in accumulating this large property; and therefore I am quite prepared to support the repeal of the law of primogeniture. I am quite prepared to support an Act of Parliament to prevent men entailing their property upon future generations, and I am quite prepared to join in any measures that will make the sale of land an easy and inexpensive proceeding; and I believe if we adopt measures of that kind without any violent change, that the land of this country, in the course of two or three generations, will get into a much larger number of hands, and you may rely upon it the effect would have a most beneficial influence in the cultivation of the land, and in increasing the products of the soil. But there is not only the question of the ownership of the land but also of the tenancy, and I want to see an Act of Parliament passed that will put the English farmer in a better position as an occupant of the land in this country than he is in at the present moment. I don't want to see land held by farmers, either with or without capital, lying unproductive for want of capital to work it, or in consequence of insecurity of tenure the tenant refusing to cultivate it in a proper manner. And, therefore, I am prepared to support a system of tenant right for the English farmer, and I believe we should see a very great increase in the productions of the soil if we had tenant right in conjunction with the division of great property. Well, gentlemen, you have a great interest in this question. It is not that many of you may get possession of any portion of the land, but what your interest is is this: that your labour should be able to purchase as much of the products of the soil as it fairly can be expected to purchase; and if the land of this country does not produce as much as it ought to do, you are all losers, and the nation at large is a loser. When I tell you that under moderate calculation the land of this country at the present time does not produce one-third as much as it ought to do, and that if the land produced what it ought to do we should not need to import ten or eleven million quarters of corn annually as we now have to do, we should produce a much larger amount of food for the people. I say you have a great interest in the question, and you have the right to claim that there shall be such laws passed as to secure that the soil of this country

shall be of the greatest possible benefit to the population. It is not only a working man's question, but it is also a farmer's question. I fully believe that when we get the Ballot we shall find that opinions such as those I ventured just now to express will influence the minds of farmers, and that instead of being under the thumb of landowners, when they feel that they have votes, and can exercise them without the landowners knowing, they will take care to exercise those votes in promoting their own interests, and if they do that they will also promote the interests of the public at large. Well, gentlemen, I have occupied your time too long. I have not ventured to go over the various questions, many of which, in the House of Commons, I have taken an active part in. I have no doubt you carefully look over, from time to time, the divisions upon the important questions of the day, and I dare say most of you have done me the favour to read any remarks that may have been reported of what I have said in the House of Commons. I have not time, in fact, to go through all the various questions which have come before our notice during the past session, but I may, at all events, say this to you, that the last session has been, as you know, a most laborious one, and I did my share in the labour of that session, not only in the House of Commons, but as a member of a Royal Commission sitting three days a week, and also of a select committee of the House of Commons sitting two days a week. I had frequently to work, at all events as your servant, not less than ten or twelve hours, and sometimes fourteen out of the twenty-four. That was hard work, but I claim nothing from your hands for that work. I acknowledge that it has been to me a work of great pleasure and satisfaction. You have placed me by your support in a position in which I fully believe that I am able to do some good to my fellow-countrymen. So long as you continue me in that position, and I have every reason to believe you will continue me in that position, for I have the satisfaction to receive continued assurances of consideration and support which are most gratifying to me—I shall give my services, if my health and life are spared, with great pleasure and satisfaction; and I hope that when those services come to an end that all party struggles and personal feelings may be forgotten, and that my fellow-townsmen, without distinction of party or religion, may be willing to bear testimony that I have been “a good and faithful servant.”

No. II.

Annual Address to Constituents, delivered in the Public Hall, Warrington, Nov. 27th, 1872.

Gentlemen, I have at all times great satisfaction in appearing before my constituents, and I have at the present moment greater satisfaction than usual, because I do it with my friend Mr. Crosfield, in the chair, and because you, the people of Warrington, have the opportunity of showing as you did when he entered the room, that you appreciate his recent munificent generosity. My friend,

Mr. George Crosfield, is anxious in his day and generation to do good not only to his fellow-townsmen who now live, but to the townsmen who will succeed us in years to come. He has set a great example of munificent generosity, and I am sure we all feel that we are honoured by his presence to-night, and that we have amongst the Liberal party of Warrington a man like him. The chairman has intimated that I should give you some account of the proceedings of the last session of Parliament. I do not intend to occupy your time long on that point, because in reference to the measures passed during the last session I have no doubt you are all very fully acquainted with their character, and you are all probably acquainted with the way in which I voted in reference to them. I won't dwell upon the ballot, except to say that I consider it to be a great success; and although the Tories, who profess to be a law-respecting generation, are doing their best to defeat the law in favour of secret voting, by card tricks, and in other ways, I believe they will be disappointed, and that it will be found that the ballot will work a revolution in society in this kingdom, and that whenever public feeling wishes to express itself—whenever there is any great class injustice to be removed—then no Tory tricks or subterfuges will prevent those who desire to vote from voting according to that desire, secretly and freely, and the ballot box will tell the public opinion of this country in future upon all great questions in a way that it has never yet done. The Government last session brought in a Licensing Bill, which I in the main supported. I think it is a moderate and a prudent measure, and superior to the Bill brought in by Mr. Bruce in 1871, which I considered at the time was open to very serious objections. I do not know whether you took the trouble, or whether it was reported in such a way as to enable you to see the course I took in reference to that Bill, but I may say that I adopted a moderate course. I did not try to take an extreme course, and I hope the new Licensing Act will have a fair trial, and that it will work much good. I believe the respectable houses of licensed victuallers will suffer no disadvantage, but on the contrary, that they will derive advantage, while the Bill will have the effect of putting a stop to a large amount of the disreputable and disgraceful transactions which I am sure the respectable licensed victuallers will be readily disposed to condemn as much as any one in this room. Therefore I would recommend to all parties engaged in the licensing trade to give the Act a fair trial. The effect of it will be to lessen the number of public houses by closing those of the worst class, and it will also lessen the hours during which public houses are open by giving to the magistrates the power to alter those hours within certain limits according to the wants of the locality. I hope, therefore, that the Act will be found to work satisfactorily, and that it will be accepted by all parties as a desirable and advantageous piece of legislation. There is another point I must briefly allude to, and that is to express approval of the course the Government has taken in reference to the American arbitration case. I honour the Government for the course they have taken on that question. It is a glorious example to civilised nations that they should give this evidence of their disposition not to submit questions in dispute between them to the arbitrement of the

sword, but to submit them to the arbitrement of reason. That is a Christian policy, and I believe altogether it will prove a wise policy, because what would have been the cost if we had gone to war with America? Do you suppose that a war with America could have happened without every man in this room suffering from it? It would have cost us hundreds of millions of money, and a large number of valuable lives. It would have stopped the great trade between these two countries, and would have been a fratricidal and criminal war of the worst description. And this might have happened if these causes of dispute between the two great nations of the Anglo-Saxon race had not been removed. It is a great blessing that they have been removed, although we have to pay the penalty of allowing the Alabama to go forth on its piratical cruise. We submitted it to a just tribunal which heard the question on both sides, and decided what was a fair compensation for us to pay, and I think we ought to submit to its decision without murmuring. With regard to the San Juan arbitration, that island is totally unimportant. It is a matter of not the slightest moment to this country whether America, or the dominion of Canada as part of Great Britain, takes possession of that island. I believe that the contemplated object of the treaty drawn up by Lord Ashburton was to give Vancouver's Island to Great Britain, and that object has been attained by the San Juan award. It is absurd for men like Lord Delamere, or for "Punch," to talk about "eating humble pie." Not one of you will in the slightest degree be any worse because a small island belongs to the United States, and not to us, but you would have been a vast deal worse if it had been decided otherwise, and any serious dispute had arisen between us and America, out of such a trumpery and insignificant question. I do not intend to-night to go into the question of national expenditure, for the reason that I have gone into it very fully on recent occasions. You know that I have condemned the great expenditure which the present Government and preceding Governments have gone to. I honour the present Government for their work. I admire Mr. Gladstone's statesmanship far higher than that of any statesman of recent times, but I cannot shut my eyes to the fact that the present Government, like many preceding Governments, have allowed the spending servants of the Crown to have too much influence; and the result has been that we are expending an amount of money which is totally unjustifiable. I believe there is a waste of millions every year. I shall not go into particulars to night, but I can only promise you that I shall continue to do as I have hitherto done. In my place in Parliament, whatever Government is in power, I shall consider it my duty to look after the interests of the people, and whenever my independence comes into play in regard to what I believe to be for the public good, I shall take a line of opposition to any Government spending money which I believe they ought not to spend, because I know that every million of money taken out of the taxes of this country tends to depress the industry of the country, and robs the working classes of a certain measure of enjoyment which they otherwise would possess. No doubt the Government have made some reductions; they have reduced the expenses by £1,500,000 this year as compared with the previous year.

I am glad even of small mercies. I hoped when I had the pleasure of speaking to you last year there would have been a greater reduction, and I have reason to hope that there may be a still further reduction. Still it leaves the expenditure of this year at £71,000,000 a year. I say it is a perfect disgrace to any Government not to carry on the government of the country under 71 millions a year. The great expense is, no doubt, in the army and navy. I find that the army and navy during the last 15 years have cost no less than £400,000,000 of money—one-half the National Debt—double the amount which the French have paid to Germany as an indemnity to get rid of the invading hosts that were encamped upon their country. It is more than the total sum paid in wages throughout the entire United Kingdom in one year. Cast your imagination for a moment over this busy country; think of all the cotton mills with their thousands and hundreds of thousands of operatives; think of all the woollen and silk mills, and iron works. Cast your eyes over the corn fields, acre upon acre, county upon county, everywhere men working from daybreak to sunset, and with the sweat of their brow earning their daily bread, and think that the whole of the immense sum of money that puts into force all this power, the wages paid for all this labour in town and country, operative and agricultural, and which supports all their families, have been swept away in 15 years to pay for the Army and Navy. What do you get for it? They say you have got protection from risk. From what risk? Where does the risk come from? I venture to say that this country was never so safe as it is at the present moment; never so little in danger of attack from anybody, and never so likely to keep out of any quarrel if we will only mind our own business, and not meddle with what does not belong to us. But there is a surplus in the Exchequer. The taxes of the country are producing a very large sum of money; Mr. Lowe has a surplus, and a number of people are always ready to make a grab for it. They are getting up a panic as they always do. I dare say it is within the recollection of the oldest man in this room that whenever there used to be a panic it was always France. Many elderly men present when they were children were frightened with the cry that "Old Boney" was coming. And when a number of us were young it was Louis Phillipe who was coming to invade us. Well, he did invade us, but it was as plain Mr. Smith, in an open boat sailing across the Channel and flying from his own country. Then Louis Napoleon was to invade us. He has invaded us. I do not know exactly where he is now. He is somewhere in England, either in the neighbourhood of London or at Torquay. But he is a most inoffensive man, an elderly gentleman, getting rather corpulent, and not at all likely to disturb anybody in this room. We have got clear of France; that country has enough to do to look after herself, and now these people are looking all over the world to find a ground of panic. They have at length discovered that in Russia an iron gunboat is being built which will have to get its armour from Sheffield. It is to be called "Peter the Great," and the whole country has got into a flurry lest it should prove more formidable than anything we have, and all are in a state of excitement lest when it is ready in two or three years' time it shall come

sailing over and bombard Liverpool. I do not think I need occupy your time in speaking seriously upon such a ridiculous panic as that. It is not my intention to dwell upon the question of expenditure, but I promise you I shall continue to the utmost of my ability to oppose any unnecessary expenditure. I am anxious for a short time to direct your attention to what I believe to be a great question coming upon us, and to what I may call the question of the future. You know we Liberals ought rather to look at the future than the past. We have a glorious past to look back upon. We can tell our young friends around us who have not heard of the past, or who have not realised it, that we have gained great victories for the benefit of this country. But still the Liberal party, or an element of it, are asking "What are we to do next, and next?" There is a great question coming up. It is the land question, and it is one which touches your interest very closely. It may be divided into two parts. The first is what proportion of the taxation of the country should be borne by the land, and the second—what is to be done with the land so as to free it from those feudal restrictions which make it a gigantic monopoly opposed to the interests of the people at large? I noticed that there was a meeting recently of Tories at Winsford. It was a very important assembly; there was a lord in the chair, and several noble lords and ladies and honourables present; in fact, it was a most aristocratic party. And Lord Delamere, in the course of his speech, said "It behoved the Conservatives to be very watchful, because they did not know what Mr. Gladstone would do next. He could only say that for the life of him he could not tell what Mr. Gladstone would do. If any gentleman could tell him what Mr. Gladstone's next rooted conviction would be—what upas tree he would next cut down, he could tell them. But he did not know; and what was more to the purpose, he did not believe Mr. Gladstone himself knew. They might depend upon it that the storm signal was up, and it was their duty as Conservatives to watch and be on their guard, though they might not be aware from what quarter the hurricane would blow." I can picture to myself all these frightened Winsford lords and ladies crouching in a corner waiting for the coming storm. I may tell them something that they do not seem to know. These people at Winsford remind me of an American political party that used to be called the "Know Nothings," and certainly they deserve that name, for they seem to know nothing at all, they do not even know what Conservatism is, and I cannot tell them. But I can tell them from what quarter the next political hurricane will blow. It will blow from the land. Lord Delamere is curious to know something about this "upas" tree. There is a great upas tree in this country; it is the growth of centuries, with branches spread over the entire kingdom, whose fruit poisons industry, and whose packed roots make the soil sterile. That great upas tree is the feudal system and the land laws; and unless I mistake, if public opinion expresses itself powerfully enough, Mr. Gladstone is just the man to lay his axe to the root of that tree. One branch of it is the unjust way in which the taxation of the country is levied. It is levied in a most unfair manner towards industry and in a very partial manner towards the land. Last session, Sir

Massey Lopes, who is a very respectable country gentlemen, a county magistrate, and an able member of Parliament—the honour of whose personal acquaintance I have, and certainly entertain towards him a very friendly disposition—brought forward a motion with reference to the burdens on land. It is curious that every now and then the landowners, notwithstanding all the advantages they possess, raise the cry that the land is too heavily burdened; and so Sir Massey Lopes proposed a resolution to transfer from land and real property about £2,000,000 of local taxation and place it upon the general taxation of the country. There is another county magistrate and baronet, on our side of the House—Sir Massey Lopes is a Conservative—a Liberal, and a man of very great position in the county and in the country—Sir Thomas Acland. He said to me, “I have told Sir Massey Lopes that he is making a very great mistake, that he had better let this thing alone, because if he stirs in it too much it will be found that it won’t tend to the advantage of the landed interest.” I think this gentleman was perfectly right; but Sir Massey Lopes went on and his resolution went to the vote. I did not happen to be in the House that night, at least not at the time when the division took place, but I had a very good pair, for I paired against the resolution with Lord Newry. However, it was carried by a majority of a hundred, and there was great cheering from the landowners on both sides of the House. They carried this resolution, and what did it amount to? I will tell you. It meant to relieve the property of the landowners to the extent of two millions a year, at the expense of you and the other taxpayers of the country. You must bear in mind that this was not a proposal to do away with the expenditure of two millions a year, but it was a proposal to relieve the burden as they call it of local taxation, in order that it might be charged upon the Consolidated Fund, or in other words, the general taxation of the country. I am glad they did carry the resolution, and I will tell you why; because it forces the Government, and it will force the country to consider this question. And now I may remind you what Cobden said a few years ago. He gave a warning to the aristocracy, which they would have been wise if they had attended to. Some years since he said “I warn the aristocracy not to force the people to look into the subject of taxation; not to force them to see how they have been robbed, plundered, and bamboozled by them for ages.” And you will observe that the carrying of Sir Massey Lopes’ resolution, to which I just now referred, compels the people to look into this question of taxation. And if you please, I will tell you something about it. I am afraid I am rather going to deliver a sort of a professorial lecture, but you will excuse me. The total income from all sources of this country is estimated at £700,000,000 to £800,000,000 a year. The income from property, lands, and houses, amounts to £140,000,000 a year; from trades, farms, and dividends, &c., including mines and railways, £280,000,000, making together £420,000,000. The income of all classes of society, in wages for labour, and of people in positions where the income is very small and from industry, is estimated at between £300,000,000, and £400,000,000 a year. You will, therefore, see that roughly speaking, land and property amounts to about one-

fifth of the entire income of the country, the other four-fifths consisting of trade and farming, and other occupations and labour; and it is the entire income upon which the general taxation of the country is drawn. Local rates are for the poor, the highway, and the county purposes, and are very properly paid by property. Sir Massey Lopes wanted to throw out a portion of them. He objected to the lunatic asylums being charged entirely upon the county rates. There may possibly be some objection to that; but no doubt the maintenance of the poor is a first charge upon land and property which cannot be got rid of. The making of roads is also a proper charge upon land, because it would be worth nothing without good roads. In like manner many other county charges for protection of property are all very properly placed upon property; but you will observe that all these charges are levied under the name of poor, county, and highway rates, upon one-fifth of the entire property of the country, namely, the land and other real property. What Sir Massey Lopes wants is, that two millions of this taxation should be taken off this fifth-part of the property of the country towards which you pay little or nothing, and put upon the general taxes towards which you pay a great deal. That is really the secret of the whole transaction. If the land-owners paid their fair share of the general taxation of the country, it might be proper to make some change in what are called "burdens upon local taxation;" but what I say is, that so long as the land-owners do not pay their fair share of the general taxation of the country, I for one object to put any taxation off the local burdens on to the taxation paid by the general public. Now that is just the point we have to consider: I ask, do the landowners pay their fair share of the taxation of the country? They have had the chief part in the making of the laws and the levying of the taxes since the days of William the Conqueror. They have had it all their own way. When first they got the land they got it under certain feudal conditions. That is to say, they were land-holders, not land-owners. There is a great difference between a land-holder and land-owner. A land-holder only held the land subject to certain obligations, and so long as he fulfilled those obligations to the State and to the Crown, he had a right to hold it, but no longer. These obligations were, in point of fact, a sort of rent paid to the State for the privilege of holding the land. I will not go into the details of what the landowners in those days had to pay to the Crown for possession of their land. They were bound to provide the means for the defence of the kingdom; they were called upon to provide men and arms. This burden was afterwards commuted to a money payment, called "scutage" or "escutage." They had not only to do that, but the land was held subject to all sorts of claims in money and service to the king. He had the power, during the first year of an heir's possession of an estate, to take what was called the first-fruits, or, in other words, his first year's income. The king could levy all sorts of fines upon the land, and all these things amounted to a large sum of money; so that in regard to peace and war it became a most important circumstance that the whole land of the country was under the obligation to provide the king with the means of going to war. I am now

speaking upon the authority of Blackstone, who says that " whenever the kings went to war they levied escutages on their tenants, that is, on the landowners of the kingdom, to defray their expenses and to hire troops." Nothing can be clearer than that. These charges produced a very considerable sum, and they went on for hundreds of years, the government of this country being carried on by the king, with the support of his great nobles, who contributed all this means to him, for making war and for carrying on the Government of the Crown, and they would have increased as the land increased in value. How do you suppose they got rid of those charges? They got rid of them by a vote of a landowning Parliament. They simply took possession of the fee simple of the land of the kingdom, freed from all the obligations under which they held it, and passed a law to that effect in the reign of Charles II. How do you suppose they paid for it? In the simplest manner possible. Here was a nice bargain: the fee simple of the whole land of the kingdom put up to be sold, and these people were both buyers and sellers. You know how buyers and sellers manage a little transaction of this kind. They passed an Act of Parliament to the effect that the people of England—not themselves, mark you—should pay a tax of 1s. 3d. per barrel upon all the beer and ale, and a proportionate sum upon all other liquors sold throughout the kingdom, and that one half of this tax should be settled on the king's majesty, his heirs and successors, in full recompense for all tenures *in capite*, or knight's service, the courts of wards, and of emoluments thereby accruing. Can you imagine anything more gross and dishonest than the landowners taking possession of the fee simple, and not taxing themselves to support the king and the state out of their pockets, but levying upon the great masses of the people who had no vote in the Houses of Parliament in the reign of Charles II., an excise tax upon all the beer and liquor they drank, and granting it in perpetuity to the king? Mr. John Bright spoke of the taxation of the country as being essentially mean, on account of it being imposed upon the country by the richest aristocracy of the world, in such a manner as to press more heavily upon the poor than the taxation of any other country in the world. And the meanness of those landowners was as bad as their fraud. It was a great fraud upon the country to take possession of the land under those circumstances, and their meanness was greater, because, when they passed this tax levying a duty of 1s. 3d. per barrel upon all beer, they took care it was upon that sold to the people, and they specially exempted the beer brewed in their own great houses. Well, I think you will agree with Cobden that this is an instance of a transaction in which the great landowners robbed, plundered, and bamboozled the people. Then followed, about the same period of history, the great land-tax fraud, which continues to this day. Four shillings in the pound was imposed upon the annual value of land in 1692, for the purposes of the State, and that amount was to increase, as a matter of course, as the value of the land increased; but in 1697 a landowning Parliament stopped this fair arrangement, and enacted that, for all future time, land-tax should be paid on the valuation of 1692; so the effect of that law is, that while property has gone on increasing in this country to an extent unparalleled

in the history of mankind, the landowners only pay a tax upon the valuation of 1692, and the result is, that while in 1692 the value of real property was estimated at £10,000,000 a year, it is now about £140,000,000 a year. If the taxes were charged upon the present value of property it would produce £28,000,000 a year, instead of which it produces only between one and two millions a year. When the land-tax was first imposed it produced one-fourth of the entire revenue, and now it scarcely produces one-fiftieth part of the revenue. That is an instance which exists to this day of the landowners bamboozling the people. And a third great instance is found in the levying of probate and legacy duties upon all kinds of property except land. When, at the end of the last century, the bill was introduced to impose legacy and probate duties, it included, fairly and properly, all kinds of property—land and personal property. The landowning Parliament of that day, when it got the bill before it, separated the bill into two parts. There was one bill imposing legacy and probate duty upon land, and another bill imposing legacy and probate duty upon other kinds of property. They passed the bill imposing legacy and probate duty upon other kinds of property, but they rejected the bill imposing legacy duty upon land. Don't you think this was, in the words of Mr. Cobden, "a robbing, plundering, and bamboozling of the people?" What has been the effect? The consequence has been that all kinds of property, except the land, paid probate and legacy duty up to 1853. But since then there has been a succession duty levied upon land, and then only in a very unfair and partial manner. The result of this is, that up to last year the legacy and probate duties since 1797 produced about £144,000,000 upon all kinds of property except land, while freehold land only paid in succession duties during that time a sum of about £11,000,000 sterling. At the present time, while all other kinds of property pay in legacy and probate duties £4,000,000 a year, the average amount paid by land is under £1,000,000. I shall not go into minor details in the matter of taxation. I have put forward these three great points for your consideration. But when I am told about the "burdens upon land," I say the boot is on the other leg. I say the land has shirked its fair share of the taxation of the country for hundreds of years. I say that the landowners, by evading the obligations under which land was formerly held to provide for the defence of the country and for other payments to the Crown, have neglected what the country had a right to require at their hands. By the fraudulent valuation for the purposes of the land-tax, and by the dishonest mode of levying probate and legacy duties. We are challenged to consider the question of taxation, and we are justified in saying with Mr. Cobden that the aristocracy make a great mistake in challenging us to go into that question, because we find that the whole history of the taxation has been one of bamboozlement as regards the interests of this country. This is not only so, but the land of this country pays a smaller proportion of taxation than in any country in Europe. In Prussia and Holland land and real property pay nearly twice as much in taxes as in England; in France and Austria nearly three times as much; in Belgium and Hungary it pays more than three times as much; and as long as this injustice con-

tinues you must be very careful not to allow any burden now levied upon local taxation to be thrown upon the general taxation of the country, which presses so unfairly upon the industry of the people. Mr. Gladstone has promised that he will consider the question of local taxation. He is forced to do it by the squires ; and I hope, when he does so, he will consider the question of general taxation with a view of making the matter fair towards the different classes of society. I think he will do as much as he can ; and the Tories are beginning to suspect that also. Mr. Wilbraham Egerton, in his speech at Winsford the other day, which was only an echo of many of the speeches delivered by Conservative members of Parliament, said that while it was important that the taxation of land should be dealt with, he had no confidence in Mr. Gladstone. Of course not. "But he hoped the question would be dealt with by the Conservatives, who would, no doubt, adopt measures in a Conservative and statesmanlike spirit." Precisely. Just as in former years the landowners, "in a Conservative and statesmanlike spirit," levied a tax upon beer in order to pay their obligations. In the same "Conservative and statesmanlike spirit" in which they settled that the valuation of 1692, upon which they were paying taxes upon land, should continue for ever, and in the same "Conservative and statesmanlike spirit" in which they decided that all kinds of property should pay legacy and probate duties, except their own. No doubt this was all very "Conservative and statesmanlike, and Mr. Wilbraham Egerton and the Tories wanted Mr. Disraeli to do the same kind of trick. There is no man who could do it better. I will answer for that. If Mr. Disraeli were in power, and he had to propose a measure upon local taxation, he would make a speech that would fill five or six columns of the *Times*. It would be full of figures, full of very clever phrases, and would be wonderful in its manipulation of the burdens of taxation ; it would put something on here, and take something off there ; it would divide something else perhaps between the owner, the occupier, and the Exchequer ; and altogether it would be such a fine operation that I defy any inexperienced person to tell under which thimble the pea was hidden. But I can tell you what the end would be. You would find he had dexterously abstracted two or three millions out of your pockets, and placed them in the pockets of the landowners with the quick-fingeredness of an Eastern juggler. I do not know what course the Government may purpose taking ; but I will endeavour to put before you what I think would be a fair proposal. It is this : That land and all other kinds of real property, including mines, pay by a graduated tax, which should include that already paid in the sham land tax and also the property tax, a sum equal to one-fourth of the entire taxation of the kingdom, say £18,000,000. This would be only fair in consideration of the obligations under which the land of this country is held. I propose also that a uniform probate and legacy duty should be imposed upon all kinds of property, including land, and by that means the amount paid would probably be £4,000,000, in place of £800,000, which it pays at the present time. As the result of that operation, supposing it were carried out, land would then pay some £22,000,000 a year ; and if it did that, I for one would be prepared to

say, "Let bygones be bygones." We cannot hope to get back the hundreds of millions which have been taken from this country by the landowners, but we will forget and forgive, and we will even give Sir Massey Lopes the boon of the lunatic asylums. I think this would be a fair and reasonable and statesmanlike proposition, and I believe it is far better that we should deal with the obligation that land has in reference to the support of the State, by putting a fair amount of taxation upon real property in proportion to its increasing value, than that we should entertain for a moment any of those visionary schemes—for I venture to call them so—which have been recently put forward. We have heard it proposed that land should be bought up by the State, and that landowners should be compensated; but I cannot accede to that; first of all I believe it would lead to an enormous amount of waste and jobbery, that land would be far worse cultivated than even at present, and the whole would be most detrimental to the public welfare. Then it is proposed that the State should take possession of all increase that might arise in the value of land. I think that also objectionable, because the effect of it would be to discourage industry and providence, which makes men try to improve their land. What we have the right to require is, that as regards the taxation of the land it should be put on such a basis that it should pay its fair share of taxation, and as it increased in value it should pay a greater share of the general taxation of the country. But I am afraid I am occupying your time rather too long. The amount of obligation that the land has to pay in the form of taxes to the State is only one part of the right which the people possess appertaining to the land. We have a right to claim that the land shall be so held as to produce the greatest amount of food for the community at large. It is a common saying that "a man has a right to do what he likes with his own," but that is not true as regards land. It is not his own, in the sense that no man made it. It is the original inheritance of the human race, and the whole species. John Stuart Mill says truly that "the claim of the landowners is altogether subordinate to the general policy of the State; and an eminent writer, Samuel T. Coleridge, a man of Conservative opinions, whose authority will not be disputed by any Conservative, as a great and wise thinker, says in his Second Lay Sermon "landed property was a trust rather than property held for great objects connected with the cultivation of the soil, and other social objects, and not to be diverted to the particular purposes of the owner until after those objects had been completely fulfilled." Bear these words in mind, for they are at the root of the land question. Remember that the ownership of land is a trust, and the people of England have a right to see that that trust is fulfilled. Just consider the difference between land and any other property. Take for instance the Koh-i-Noor diamond. I do not know whether you have visited the Crystal Palace in London, and seen that gem under a glass case. It is simply a piece of sparkling crystal, beautiful no doubt, and remarkable for its size, and is considered almost of incalculable value. It is supposed that this little bit of sparkling mineral is worth something like £3,000,000. Supposing any individual possessed it and threw it into the sea, it would matter little to anybody except himself, and nobody would be the worse

for it ; but if a Scotch Duke, who owns half a county, clears off and depopulates thousands of acres to make a deer forest for his own sport, he defrauds industry and robs the commonwealth, and ought to be restrained by law. The country has a right to inquire into this great trust, and whether the landowners of the kingdom are fulfilling that trust. I say they are not fulfilling it. I will quote another authority they won't dispute, Lord Derby, who is a moderate and sensible man. He estimates that the land of this country does not produce more than one-half what it ought in the way of grain and other kinds of produce. Mr. Mechi, a practical farmer, and a man whose authority stands very high, puts it far less than that, and says from his own experience that the land of this country does not produce more than one-fifth of what it ought to do. How is this ? I will tell you. To a great extent, except in the payment of taxes, land still continues to be held under feudal conditions. The land-laws have been framed to give political power to the possessors of the soil. Every facility is given by the law for the maintenance of large estates in single hands. There is practically a monopoly in land, which has increased from year to year, and only leads to the agglomeration of great estates. There is nothing like it in the world. It is unique. There are countries of peasant proprietors, as in France, Belgium, and Switzerland. There are other lands with a class analogous to our landed aristocracy ; but there is no other country where the land is for the most part owned by one class, farmed by another, and tilled by the third. What do you see as the result of this remarkable condition of land in England ? I have told you what has been the case in regard to its produce, but what do you see in reference to every class of the community ? Landowners, when they meet together at out of the way places like Winsford, talk as though they themselves would settle the question. They sit round a table in a second-class hotel, where there are perhaps two or three big landowners and two or three land agents, and a lot of poor shrinking farmers. It was not a question, as Mr. Wilbraham Egerton said, to be pleasantly settled by the landowner and the farmer in order that they might prevent interference on the part of anybody else. There are a great many people interested beside the landowner and farmer ; and if my words reach any farmers' ears, I would say if a tenant settles that question or tries to settle it in a snug room with the landowner and the land agent, he will be done. Farmers are crying out for protection of their interests. They say they must have compensation for unexhausted improvements, for the capital invested in the land and the industry they have put forth to improve it, and they ought not to be liable to be kicked out at six months' notice. Of course not. They ask, and very properly so, to have a law so that if they are turned out they shall be paid for what they have put into the land. The landlords say (and here the ballot-box will tell), "We must satisfy these farmers ; they have votes in counties, and a question is coming up which is rather taking with farmers." And they say, "My dear fellow, of course you shall have compensation for unexhausted improvements ; who wants to deny that ?" They never gave it them. In a great part of England they now say, "We are quite willing, when

you leave your farm, you shall have an arbitration. Don't let us go to Parliament, for if you give that man Gladstone a finger in the pie he will spoil everything. We will settle it between ourselves in a pleasant and agreeable way. We will meet together and agree as to what is the custom of the country, and if you leave your farm you shall have an arbitration to settle what the incoming tenant shall pay for unexhausted improvements." The tenant farmers have not yet felt their legs. Let them have one general election under the ballot. I don't know what the first election will do in regard to the return of members, but I know there is one thing it will do—it will teach the people their power in a way they never knew it before; and the second general election under the ballot will teach landowners that the farmers have a power they never understood they possessed. At present farmers have not stiff enough backs. They meet in their Chambers of Agriculture and Associations and talk with bated breath of what they would like to be done for their interests. Imagine a manufacturer like Mr. McMinnies carrying on a large cotton mill as a yearly tenant, and putting thousands and hundreds of thousands of pounds into his business, and yet subject to six months' notice, with the proviso that if it was let to somebody else his successor should pay by arbitration for unexhausted improvements. If my friend were to carry on a great cotton business on any such tenancy, although I have a very high opinion of him, I would be the first to sign a document of *de lunatico inquirendo*. And the farmer is in exactly the same position. If he put capital and industry into the land, he must not only have some fixity of tenure, but he has a right to unexhausted improvements, and in the same way that has been conceded to the occupiers of the soil in Ireland, if a landowner turn him out he shall be able to claim compensation for disturbance. Until the farmers have the boldness to claim this kind of fixity of tenure which will prevent landlords disturbing them without paying several years' rent as compensation, all their talk is worth nothing; and any private arrangement between landlord and tenant is mere bosh. Under it no more capital would come into the land than comes at the present moment. We must have an Act of Parliament and deal with the landlords in the same way that was done in Ireland. We must treat the owners of land in England in the same way as the owners of land in Ireland, and give that security to the tenant which will enable him to develop the capacities of the soil to its fullest extent. Not only are the farmers complaining of the present state of thing, but there is fast going through the country, from classes which have been dumb for years, the most down-trodden classes in the three kingdoms—the humble tillers of the soil—men who earn their bread by the sweat of their brow, toiling from morning to night exposed to damp, cold, and wet weather, a cry for justice. These poor men have now found their voices and demanded to live. They have been treated for generations like cattle. No, not like cattle exactly, because there are not fashionable institutions to give them prizes. Yes, they have by the way, for cattle have prizes, and so have these poor men. If a man has been in a particular service for many years and brought up a certain number of children without parochial aid they have a great

gathering once a year, and the squire of the parish and his lady come down and give away a few prizes amongst these poor fellows, and they go away highly gratified, although they have, perhaps, only been in receipt of 10s. or 12s. a week, and not that much when the weather has been bad or they have been ill and unable to work. When you come to inquire into the condition of the agricultural labourer it is as disgraceful as you can possibly conceive. He is divorced from the land, and has a hopeless life before him. His children from six, seven, and eight years of age are sent to work in the fields ; I am afraid to say how many hours, but I have a report in my pocket of a Commission appointed in reference to the employment of women and children in agriculture in which there is a statement made of the number of hours they work, and it is so extraordinary that I am afraid to repeat it from memory. It says, speaking of the counties comprised in the inquiry : "The hours are very long, often from five o'clock in the morning until seven o'clock at night ; and these hours are occupied with labour—of course in the case of very young children it is light—but they are occupied in the field in the case of all children from six, seven, eight, up to 10 years of age." And here you have a great mass of the people engaged in the cultivation of the land, toiling upon 10s. or 12s. a week, and with their children eking out a scanty subsistence by working from five o'clock in the morning till seven o'clock at night ; children so young that you would be almost afraid to let them cross the street without protection ; and these poor infants are sent into the field to drive away birds, to attend to horses, and other occupations of that kind. When I walk into the country amongst scenes of almost paradise ; when I think that a great part of that country is held by large landowners whose properties are increasing in value, and themselves enjoying the produce of that property ; when I think of the contrast presented by these poor labourers, who are starving upon 10s. or 12s. a week, and that poor little infants are sent out to work in the cold fields, for 14 hours a day, it does seem to me that a system which produces such results is condemned on the very face of it, and we have a right to say that the land is not doing what it ought to do. If this state of things ought to be dealt with, and I think it ought, I for one am prepared to the extent of my voice, and to the extent of my vote, to deal with it. We have a right to say that this state of things shall not continue, and I think we have a right to call upon Parliament to repeal all laws, the effect of which is to give stability to such a state of things. Any laws which tend to tie up the land, to create restrictions, and to prevent its proper cultivation, ought to be repealed ; and I think one of the first laws which ought to go is the law of Primogeniture. It is a monstrous thing that the land of this country should, in the case of owners dying without will, be left to the eldest son as a matter of course. I see that Lord Delamere, amongst the other wise things he said at Winsford, spoke about Primogeniture. He knows all about it because he happens to be the eldest son who took all the property. I don't know whether he has any younger brothers, but I can tell Lord Delamere that I know some younger brothers of noble lords, and they do not take the same view of Primogeniture that he does. But Lord Delamere made this remarkable

statement. He said : " Were they prepared to see the English Church dealt with as the Irish Church had been ? Were they prepared to see the English landlords served as the Irish landlords were ? He hoped not. Were they prepared to see Primogeniture abolished ? " And then the Tories shouted " No. " Speaking on the subject of the abolition of Primogeniture, he said that in 1847, M. Gallet, prefect of police at Paris, under Louis Philippe, in conversation, urged him to stick by the law of Primogeniture. He replied that he was likely to do so, as he was one of the lucky ones who was inborn that way. M. Gallet, who had to look after the dangerous classes in France, assured him that the danger arose to a considerable extent from the minute sub-division of property. A number of people had just sufficient to put food in their mouths and clothes on their backs, they congregated in the great towns, and it was of them that his black book was composed. He believed that the abolition of these things would be a serious danger and a difficulty to the kingdom. That is to say, this French prefect of police—who is a kind of chief constable—thought, and Lord Delamere believed the Tories of Winsford would swallow it, that men who have something in their pockets, who have something to eat, and something to wear are more dangerous people than men who have nothing at all. It is quite true that in France there are a great many peasant proprietors, but they are not the dangerous class. I suppose that between 200,000 and 300,000 would represent the whole of the people in this country who have land ; the large landowners would range at about 30,000, and the very large proprietors less than that. But in France there are seven and a half millions ; in Prussia there are five millions, and in Belgium, Switzerland, and Germany many hundred thousands of proprietors of the soil. In one of the Manchester papers lately, some interesting letters have appeared, written by Joseph Kay, a man of great ability and energy, who has been travelling in Germany and other parts of the Continent. He said that the effect of these peasant proprietors cultivating their own plots of land was that the whole country was like a garden. They were far from being the dangerous class. On the contrary, it was the greatest possible inducement to frugality and prudence, because every man knew that by care and industry he had a chance of getting into that coveted position of acquiring land of his own. So far, therefore, from making him a dangerous citizen, it makes him a good citizen, and cannot fail to have a good effect upon his character. It is not only the law of primogeniture which prevents the division of property that is objectionable, but the law of entail by which a man can tie up his property for generations, and prevent his son when he succeeds him from having more than a life interest in it. A great part of the property in this country is so entailed, and what is the consequence ? If a man has only a life interest in property he does not spend money to develop it, but gets as much out of it as he can. He may be a spendthrift and an extravagant man, and it matters nothing to him about improving his estate so long as he gets his life interest out of it. But the effect of this law is iniquitous in another way. You will remember some two or three years ago the Duke of Newcastle could not pay his debts, and became a bankrupt.

It does not matter whether a Duke or any one else becomes bankrupt if his creditors are put under the same law as others ; but such is not the case. He has only a life interest in his estate, and the effect of that is that it cannot be sold for the benefit of his creditors, they can only appropriate his life interest. The estate is no doubt pinched to the utmost, and everything done to get as much out of it as possible. I would treat a Duke's property as I would the property of a tradesman if he became bankrupt—sell it to the best advantage, and distribute the proceeds among his creditors. I am ashamed of having trespassed so long upon your time. But if it is true what Lord Derby said, that the land only produces one-half as much as it ought, without going to the extent of Mr. Mechi's higher estimate ; if we first of all could get it more generally distributed amongst the community, and do away with all laws which tie it up ; if we could give tenants the advantage of full security for their capital, in order that they might develop their holdings ; if we could encourage the ownership of small properties by making the transfer of land as easy as the transfer of any other kind of property, then I believe as a result we should find that the land of this country would produce twice or three times as much as it does now. If it did—bear this in mind—it would cause the laying out of a large amount of capital on the land. Mr. Mechi estimates that we might increase our production five-fold, and says that the average sum invested per acre is only £4, while he supplies a capital of £15 per acre. If we take only £5 as the additional sum that might be invested in the land cultivation, it would employ an additional capital of £250,000,000. It would largely increase the demand for labour, and would so develop industry that the wages of the labourer would no longer remain at the miserable pittance of 10s. to 12s. per week, nor would his children need to work 14 hours a day. Instead of paying £30,000,000 or £40,000,000 for the corn and meat imported from foreign countries, we should have an adequate supply from our own country, no longer at famine prices, and there would be such a constant flow of production, and such a demand for industry, that it would not only benefit and fertilise the soil, but it would carry its beneficent influence throughout all classes of society ; and you would find that in every branch of labour, while the necessary articles of subsistence were reduced in price, wages throughout the kingdom would rise. I am drawing no picture of my own imagination. I can appeal to an authority upon the subject, which will not be gainsaid or questioned. Richard Cobden, in one of his last speeches, said, "If I were 25 or 30, instead of, unhappily, twice that number of years, I would take Adam Smith in hand, and I would have a league for free trade in land, just as we had a league for free trade in corn. You will find the same authority in Adam Smith for the one as for the other, and if only taken up on politico-economic grounds, the agitation would be certain to succeed ; and if you can apply free trade to land, I say the man who did that will have done for England probably more than we have been able to do by making free trade in corn." These were the words of a man who never spoke lightly, and I believe them in their full force. Many of you can recall the time, 30 years ago, when we were struggling for free trade in

corn ; you can remember the starving operatives of Stockport, Bolton, and Manchester ; that there was no work in the mills, and the price of bread had risen to famine prices ; when there was a disturbance of trade and industry ; when the exports of the country were restricted, and every employment was lessened ; that even then the landowners refused—until they were driven by the Irish potato famine to yield, although they resisted our attempt—free trade in corn : and when at length we succeeded over these monopolists and over the Tories of those days, it was a hard battle, and there may be many young men in this room whose age does not admit of their remembering that struggle. They cannot recollect the struggle in Warrington when we had to oppose this monopoly on the hustings ; they cannot remember the starvation of their families, nor the decaying state of trade. They only think of trade as it is now. And look what has happened since free trade in corn. You have had the wages of industry advanced ; you have had the hours of labour reduced ; you have had all those great advantages that were formerly enjoyed by persons of greater wealth spread to some extent among the mass of the population. And if that great change has taken place ; if labour has so far advanced in value ; if the comforts of the working-man have so much increased in consequence of free trade, I say to you in the words of Cobden : “ Take up this question ; ” be not dismayed by the Tories of Warrington, nor by the lords who meet at Winsford. Take up this great legacy which Cobden has left to you, and you will achieve for industry a freedom as great as the freedom we achieved 30 years ago. And just as we look back upon that struggle, and think of the grand heritage we have gained for our successors, so you in this struggle, if you succeed, will leave a heritage to the industry of this country which will be equally as great, and will carry prosperity and happiness to all around you.

NO. III.

*Annual Address to his Constituents delivered in the Public Hall,
Warrington, Jan. 7, 1874.*

Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen,—I must, in the first place, thank you for the cordial reception which, for the fifth time, you have given me when I have appeared before you to render an account of my stewardship. As the Chairman has stated, I do not usually go very much into what has happened during each session of Parliament, because I trust to your looking at the public papers from week to week to watch my proceedings in the House of Commons. I have no doubt you also carefully investigate the votes which I give upon important questions from time to time. I am happy to say I have not to excuse myself or to apologise for a single vote that I have given. I am glad to say I have not received a single complaint from a single constituent in reference to any vote I have given, and therefore I may fairly conclude that my votes generally have been satisfactory to those who sent me to Parliament. I

have, as my friend the Chairman has stated, given the Government general support, but I have opposed them when I thought they were wrong. I have opposed the great expenditure of the country, which I consider to be entirely unjustifiable, because I think that £71,000,000 a year, in a time of perfect peace, is a scandalous waste of the public money, and so long as I am in Parliament I shall use my best endeavours to prevent unnecessary expenditure—to prevent abuse, and to prevent waste. But don't let us be deceived; don't let the Tories deceive us. Mr. Gladstone is far more economical than Mr. Disraeli, and Mr. Gladstone's Government are far more economical than the Tory Government which preceded it. Their expenditure during the last five years has been two and a quarter millions a year less on the average than the expenditure of the Tory Government in 1868. The House of Commons, however, is much to blame in this matter. I have seen pressure put upon the Government by the House of Commons to spend more money. In the House of Commons there are upwards of 300 members connected with the army, the navy, and the reserve forces of this kingdom; and in addition to that, you have a number of members who have sons, or nephews, or grandsons, or, it may be, uncles in one or other of these forces; and there are also about 170 members of the aristocracy, who are either lords themselves, or the sons of lords, or the nephews of lords, or the cousins of lords, or who have married the daughter of a lord. Well, all these people in the House of Commons are always wishing the Government to spend the public money, because they have an interest in the expenditure; and I can tell you, when I stand up in the House to oppose this expenditure, I have to fight an up-hill battle, and I find very few to sympathise with me, either. When I look round upon the benches of the House and perhaps see half a dozen men who are prepared to sympathise with me and support me, I also see, on the other side, a large number in favour of expenditure. Although I have not much support in the House—as I am accustomed to defeat on this point—yet, I not only receive from you, my constituents, a reward from year to year, but I have the testimony of the public voice from all parts of this great kingdom that there are many earnest men amongst my fellow-countrymen who believe I am doing a work in their behalf, and they support me by their voice—in fact, wherever I go I find they express their approval of the course I have taken. In the great battle of the session—that critical division—I voted for the second reading of the Irish University Bill, which was brought forward by the Government, not that I exactly approved of the Bill—there were many things in it I did not approve of—but it became a question of confidence—a question as to whether Mr. Gladstone or Mr. Disraeli was to rule the destinies of this kingdom. I had no doubt as to the course to take; I voted, without any hesitation, in favour of Mr. Gladstone. Is it possible to conceive a greater contrast than there is between these two men? Mr. Gladstone is unquestionably the most illustrious statesman of the present day. He has written his name in grand characters upon the history of his country, and he will leave behind him a legacy of measures which will promote the progress and prosperity of the country in future generations. His powerful voice is always raised in favour of peace and good

will amongst nations. The motto under which he led us to victory in 1868 was—"be just and fear not," and all his political instincts are in favour of popular rights and the public weal. I recollect, when he was advocating the franchise for the working classes, he described them as our own flesh and blood—an expression ridiculed by the Tories, but it was the genuine outburst of the high sentiments that guide his political career. On the other side there is Mr. Disraeli. No one can doubt the abilities of Mr. Disraeli—his abilities are wonderful and very peculiar. He has an infinitude of genius, but no policy. His most brilliant feats of statesmanship are like the tricks of a conjurer. He is a political Blondin, and can perform with equal cleverness on the tight-rope of aristocratic monopolies and land-owning privileges, or on the slack-rope of household suffrage and factory legislation. Neither friend nor foe knows what he will do next. I defy any man to gather any clear idea of his future political programme from those wonderful orations of his at Manchester and at Glasgow, stretching over several columns of the *Times* and sparkling with kaleidoscopic phraseology and theatrical metaphor. So little does he regard the burdens of the public tax-payer that he called the national debt "a fleabite." When in office, his financial measures were conspicuous failures. His reform bill was a thing full of fancy franchises, quirks, and quibbles, and was altogether so absurd that the Liberal majority in the House of Commons had to alter it from beginning to end. When it had passed, the only word that had not been altered was the word "whereas," with which it commenced. I need not occupy your time any longer, for I can describe Mr. Disraeli in one word that our ingenious American cousins have given us—it is a "slantindicular politician." Gentlemen, I shall not go into the question at any length of the celebrated letter to which the Chairman has alluded. Mr. Disraeli has a great deal to say against Mr. Gladstone and the Liberal party, but he says nothing as to what the Tories have done. He reminds me of an anecdote I read a short time ago of a carter in a neighbouring town who got turned away from his situation for some misconduct. This carter, wanting another job, put his Sunday clothes on, washed his face, and made himself look as respectable as possible. He went to a miller in order to get a situation, and the miller said to him, "Have you brought your character with you?" "My character," he said; "naw, naw, aw'm a darned deool better beawt it." Well, I am not going to defend the present Government when they committed a mistake. I do not defend what Mr. Disraeli calls their Zanzibar blunder, and I do not defend their post-office mistake. But I can tell you this. The Zanzibar blunder that Mr. Disraeli talks about was no doubt a bad business arrangement on the part of Mr. Lowe. If it had not been stopped it would, in the course of a few years, have cost this country six or seven thousand a year, but what is that compared with the stupendous job of Mr. Disraeli's Government called the Galway Packet Contract, which, if it had not been stopped, would have cost this country a very large sum of money? In that contract the Tory Government agreed to give £75,000 a year for carrying the mails to America—mails which were already carried from Liverpool. A mail was not wanted from Galway, but still the Tory Government gave a contract for seven years,

and if it had not been cancelled by a subsequent Parliament, the country would have been burdened to the extent of upwards of half a million of money, and that would have been owing to the scandalous job and blundering of the Tory Government. Then there was the Dover contract, which was also a scandal, because it was a sum of money given in addition to the amount paid for the carriage of letters from Dover to Calais—money given, undoubtedly, to promote political corruption in Dover. That contract, however, was cancelled in the House of Commons under circumstances which reflected very great discredit upon the Tory Government. Then comes the Post Office mistake, which amounts to this. Mr. Scudamore, a very active and zealous servant of the Post Office, thought it right to spend £800,000 in the putting up of additional telegraph lines without first having got the consent of the House of Commons or the Treasury. That was, no doubt, a very objectionable proceeding, and I cannot defend it, because, as a member of the Public Accounts Committee, I was actively engaged, during last session, in bringing that blunder to light, and in laying it before the House of Commons. But that £800,000 is not lost. It has been spent in putting up new telegraphs, and is now bringing in a very good income and represents a large amount of Government property. What did Mr. Disraeli and his Government do about these telegraphs? When he bought them from the telegraph companies, he managed to buy them in such a very unbusiness-like and blundering manner that, after paying five or six millions sterling, we have now a little bill brought forward by the London and North-western Railway Company, and the Great Western Railway Company, and several other leading lines, amounting to upwards of £5,000,000, which we may possibly have to pay. The Chairman (Mr. Crosfield) tells me that the claim of the London and North-western Railway Company is settled, and he is sure to know. There is no doubt whatever that if Mr. Disraeli's government in 1868 had carried out that arrangement properly the telegraph companies would have been able to extinguish all these claims in connection with the railways at a very moderate sum indeed; and the Government would have bought the telegraphs clear with the permanent right of running them alongside the different railways, instead of which, under this agreement—which bears the very curious date of 1st April, 1868—we shall have to pay some millions of money. At all events the claims on the part of these companies amount to £5,000,000. These are the beams—and very big beams—in Mr. Disraeli's eye, which he should cast out before he can see clearly to pull out the very little motes in Mr. Gladstone's eye. Well, now, Mr. Disraeli says the three rules of the Washington Treaty are ruinous to this country. There is nothing that more clearly proves how completely Mr. Disraeli is wanting in sympathy with the commercial interests of this country than his statement that these three rules of the American treaty were a blunderous and ruinous mistake. What are these three rules? They provide that neither England nor America will, as neutral in the event of two countries being at war with each other, allow their ports to be made use of for sending out Alabamas and privateering vessels to prey upon the commerce of either of the combatants. So that, in fact, if we

happened to be at war with any other 'country in Europe, and had not these three rules, there might sail out of the American ports a number of Alabamas equipped, which would ravage the seas over which all our mercantile navy sail in such enormous numbers all the year round, and, it might be, sweep that fleet of vessels from the ocean, inflicting a loss on this country amounting to many millions of money. The real loss that might arise in consequence would be incalculable, but under the three rules the United States of America have undertaken—as we have undertaken—that they will use due diligence to prevent their ports being made use of for any hostile purpose. These three rules are not ruinous, but are works of great statesmanship, and we, as a mercantile country, having more vessels to seize than any other country in the world, ought to be thankful to the Liberal Government for sanctioning what, under these circumstances, may prove to be of such great advantage to the country. I do not feel very much inclined to occupy your time much longer with Mr. Disraeli's remarkable letter. Mr. Disraeli charged the Government with plundering, as well as blundering, and he explained in his Glasgow speech, that they had induced Parliament to confiscate and to despoil Church and private property in Ireland. Well, there had been plundering in Ireland, but it was not as Mr. Disraeli has put it—it was the Irish people who had been plundered by the Church, which he himself, when he was young, called an alien Church. It was the Church of a very small minority of the people, and yet it aggrandised to itself £16,000,000 of the public property of the country. There was plundering on the part of the landowners, who allowed the tenantry to improve their estates—to turn morass and bog into a flourishing cornfield, or to lay out acres of land, on which farm buildings were erected—and then exercising their power of eviction, swept away the tenantry, but kept possession of the results of their labour. The complaint against Mr. Gladstone is not that he is plundering, but that he has stopped plunder. I will not allude to all the other great measures which Mr. Gladstone's Government have passed. I believe there is no Government that has done so much in five years as Mr. Gladstone's has. I dare say you will naturally consider that the more interesting inquiry is—"What shall we do next; what is the policy of the Liberal party in the future; what have the Liberal party to do?" Last year from this platform I ventured to indicate what I believed was the great question that was rising up in the public mind, I mean the land question. I then went into the point in regard to taxation of land, and I showed you that the land had really escaped the obligations imposed upon it, and under which it was held, and that in order to get a better system of taxation there should be a larger share of the burden of taxation laid upon real property than is the case at the present time. I do not intend to go over the same ground again, but I want to show that there is a great outcry by the Tories, and it is unfortunately joined in by a certain number of Liberals, that there are burdens upon land that ought to be removed. Take care of this. They mean by removing their burdens to put them on your shoulders. The burdens must go somewhere, and if they are not where they are they will come upon the shoulders of those who are not now feeling them. Therefore

I think we ought to look with great jealousy upon any attempt to throw the burdens which are fairly chargeable upon land on other portions of the community. I shall not go into that question. I alluded to it in order to show that I did not overlook it. If the question of local taxation comes on next session I shall take the course which I have hitherto done in the House of Commons, and give votes which I believe are in the interest of the community at large, and not of any special and small class of the community. The point to which I wish to draw your attention is the fact that the land laws of this kingdom starve the land, impoverish the tenant, pauperise the labourer, raise the price of food, and rob millions of a great portion of the blessings which a good Providence intended they should enjoy. These are very serious charges against the land laws of this kingdom, and I shall try to show you that they are well founded, and, further, that the land laws have arisen from a narrow and selfish policy, which has been pursued for many centuries by the landed and territorial aristocracy of the country. The land laws are only a part of the same system we had to fight against 30 years ago. At that time the laws of this country practically prevented the importation of food; and we found that the landowners had passed such laws that it was impossible for the people of this country to import food in exchange for the manufactures they produced. We made a great struggle to get those laws repealed. Many young men don't recollect the struggle, and unfortunately many young men grow up and forget it. What was the result of that struggle? We repealed the Corn Laws and got free trade. Consider what the result has been. In 30 years our export trade of British manufactured goods to foreign countries has been increased from £51,000,000 to £256,000,000. These are such large amounts that you cannot realise them, but I will try to bring them down to such a point that they will be really intelligible. Before we carried these free trade measures, the quantity of British goods exported amounted in value per head of the population of the country at that time to £1 18s. 9d. The quantity of British goods we now export per head of the present population amounts to £8 1s. per head. So you see that the export of British manufactures has been increased more than four-fold during those 30 years, in consequence of the repeal of the Corn Laws. What does this increase in the exports mean? It means higher wages, greater comforts for our homes, and a better position altogether for the operatives in the manufacturing districts, because you not only have had employment of labour, but you receive far more food from other countries, in payment of that labour. I find, compared with what was the case 30 years ago, we import per head of the population three times as much sugar and tea, four times as much corn, butter, cheese, eggs, carrots, &c., and eight times as much rice. In those days the landowners would not allow any cattle to come into the country—not a single pound of beef. I suppose they were afraid of the people having too much to eat, but does it not seem extraordinary that only 30 years ago there was a law, which had been passed by the landowners of this country, to prevent food and cattle being brought from foreign lands in order that we might get those commodities at a cheaper rate? We got rid of that and what was the effect? Last year we introduced into

this country not less than £10,000,000 worth of cattle, sheep and lambs, beef, pork, bacon and hams, and where has all that food gone? It has been eaten—and we have to thank Mr. Cobden and Mr. Bright and the Anti-Corn Law League, and the Liberal party for all those blessings which we now enjoy. Mr. Cobden, in the last speech he made at Rochdale in 1864—and he had then lived long enough to see that the great benefits he anticipated from free trade were taking place, and to find that his prophecies were being fulfilled—said that the man who achieved the freedom of the land would probably do more for England than they who had achieved freedom in trade. Mr. Cobden was a man of such great prescience, and of extended knowledge—a man whose intellect was perspicacious, acute, and powerful—that he was not likely to make a statement of this kind without foundation, and people who are studying this land question are becoming more and more convinced that his statement was true. If we are to succeed in getting these objectionable land laws abolished we shall have to fight hard; we shall have a great struggle, something like that which we had in reference to Free Trade. We must first of all know exactly what we want, and then we must lay it before the public in language that cannot be misunderstood. I think I see in some quarters a disposition to fight the battle with gloves on, but it won't do. I notice that an honourable and learned friend of mine, Sir William Harcourt, the new Solicitor-General, in speaking at Oxford last week, seemed to take that line, and he gave this advice to land reformers—"There is another bit of homely advice I will venture to give those who really desire to reform the land laws—don't begin by ballyragging the landowners. You will only set their backs up and defeat your object." Don't deceive yourselves. If we mean business it does not matter what we say. We may stroke them down as nicely as possible, but you are sure to put their backs up. We did it in the days of the Anti-Corn Law League, but we did not defeat our object; on the contrary we succeeded. The first thing Sir William Harcourt does to make landowners satisfied, is to tell them that they have an absolute right in their property, which relieves them from any question whatever in relation to it. What he really said was—"Neither shall I inquire into the nature and origin of property in land. I am content to assume that a man's right to his land depends on the same principle as your right to the coat on your back—namely, that you have paid for it; at least, I hope you have. I am quite aware that is not a philosophical view of the matter. It is very common-place, but it is very common-sense, and so it will do for you and for me, who are politicians and not philosophers." If Sir William is right it follows that landowners have as much right to do what they like with their land as you have a right to do what you like with the coat upon your back. In fact, we always meet with that sort of a statement about having paid for the land. People say—"we have paid for our land; who has a right to raise any question as to our owning the land?" No doubt, they have paid for the land, and nobody is going to take any land from them without paying for it. But what did they buy when they bought the land? They bought a property which was subject to certain conditions of ownership, and these conditions remain notwithstanding

the money they paid for it. I won't go back into the origin of property; I don't want to take you back to those distant times in the history of this country when the King owned the whole of the land, and neither do I want to take you back to those times when the land was parcelled out amongst the greater and lesser land-owning classes, who formed regiments of soldiers to defend the country and the King. I do not want to go back to that, though it is an interesting subject. I will assume that landowners are now in possession of the land by the fact that they held it for so many generations. I will also admit that those owners who have paid for their land have a property in it which money can buy, but no more. Sir William Harcourt seems very much to dislike philosophers. He does not like John Stuart Mill, who was a great philosopher, and held very strong views upon the land question. Some of his views I do not agree with. I do not approve for instance his idea of purchasing the property of the country by the nation, and having a sort of nationalisation of the land. I think it would only lead to a nationalisation of jobbery. I do not think that is the best way out of the difficulty; but I do agree with John Stuart Mill in the opinion that property in land is entirely subject to the requirements of the State. If Sir William Harcourt won't accept Mill as an authority, I have no doubt he will accept the authority of a Judge of great distinction and ability—I mean Judge Longfield, of the Encumbered Estates Court in Ireland, who has paid especial attention to the question of landed property. What does this eminent lawyer say about the nature of property in land? It is desirable to know what ground we go upon before we begin to propose anything in connection with land that landowners will not much like. Judge Longfield says—"Property in land differs in its origin from property in any commodity produced by human labour. The product of labour naturally belongs to the labourer who produces it. . . . But the same argument does not apply to land, which is not the product of labour, but is the gift of the Creator of the world to mankind. . . . The foundation of the right to property in land is not ethical, but political. Its origin is expediency. In order that it may be cultivated to the most advantage, it is necessary that the cultivator should be secured in the enjoyments of the fruits of industry. . . . I have made these observations on the origin of property in land in order to show that the State retains the power of modifying it from time to time, in accordance with the general interests of the community. The right of private property in land is a political, not a natural institution." Then I will give you another authority, the late Samuel Taylor Coleridge, because he puts the same idea in less legal phraseology. He said—"Landed property is a trust—rather than property—held for great objects connected with the cultivation of the soil and other social objects, and not to be diverted to the particular purposes of the owner until these objects have been fulfilled." Now, gentlemen, I want to ask if this great trust has been fulfilled? Has the soil been properly cultivated, and have the political objects of the ownership been carried out? I have no difficulty in answering that question. I have abundant evidence to show that the trust of the land owners has not been fulfilled; and I shall in the first place quote some

evidence of a character, about which, I dare say, no one will raise any doubt. Last Session there was a Committee of the House of Lords appointed to consider the question of the improvement of the land. You must understand that what they meant by improvement of the land is this—There were certain Acts of Parliament under which landowners were able to borrow from the Government upon settled estates sums of money, and repay principal and interest in a certain number of years. Of course, Government in lending money is very careful in seeing that it is properly applied, and also in charging an amount which is not unreasonable for the accommodation, and it is very low. I do not like the system at all. I think it is as absurd for Government to lend these great landowners money to bolster up a vicious system, as it would be for a lot of bankrupt cotton lords to go to Government and ask them to lend a lot of money to carry on their spindles and weaving sheds. This committee was to consider whether there could not be some mode devised by which the landowners of this country could get a large amount of money under conditions which would not be so burdensome to them, and at a less cost. It was in effect another attempt to obtain advantages at the cost of the country, and the same sort of thing had gone on from time to time for many generations. It was a very distinguished committee, and consisted of three dukes, two marquises, five earls, and nine lords, and they were not common peers. They included the Duke of Richmond, the Marquis of Salisbury, Earl Derby, and Lord Egerton of Tatton, all men of great influence and weight in the country. And what do you suppose these noble lords said? They reported—and the evidence was given before them on sufficient authority—that of the 20,000,000 of acres of land in this country requiring drainage, only three millions had as yet been drained; and that taking not only drainage, but all kinds of improvement in land, only one-fifth of the land in the country had been properly attended to. Then I have the authority of Mr. Mechi, a celebrated agriculturist, who says the land does not produce one-fifth of what it ought to. And there are many gentlemen of great experience who say it does not produce more than one-third. Lord Derby, who is a man of moderate views, and very careful in what he says, has publicly stated that he thinks that with proper cultivation, the produce of the land might be doubled. Just consider for a moment what that means. I find from official returns that we feed at the present time five million head of cattle on our soil, and 28 million sheep and lambs. Supposing these were doubled and there were ten million head of cattle, and 56 million sheep and lambs being fed every year, do you think beef and mutton would be 11d. and 1s. the pound? It is not only that beef and mutton would be cheaper, but you must also consider what amount of wheat, barley, and oats can be produced on the land of this country. It is estimated that corn of the value of £80,000,000 sterling a year can be produced in England now, and supposing that was doubled you would have no need to send abroad for anything. I remember that when we were advocating the repeal of the corn laws, the Tories held up their hands—because the essence of Toryism is to raise bugbears—saying “What are you about to do? You will throw the land

of this country out of cultivation and depend upon foreigners for your supplies." Let us grow more wheat and other kinds of corn and the effect of it will be, no doubt, not only to render us independent of foreign countries, but to add to the prosperity of our own land. The wealth we have sent out to purchase food from abroad will be distributed in our own country, and will go to increase that great labour wages payment fund—that fund which does so much to maintain the prosperity of all classes of the community. You suffer, as I have shown you, from the present state of the land laws, because your mutton and your beef is dearer than it ought to be, but you have some compensation. You, at all events, have got higher wages and have greater means to purchase these higher priced provisions, but there is a class in the community which, unfortunately, has to meet these higher prices, and has not, by any means, derived the benefit from free trade you have derived. I allude to the downtrodden agricultural serfs. In the neighbourhood of manufacturing towns you will find that the wages of agricultural labourers will be, on the whole, higher than they formerly were, but in the country districts, purely agricultural, the wages of agricultural labourers do not amount to more than 11s. or 12s. per week. There was a Royal Commission appointed thirty years ago to enquire into the condition of the agricultural labourer of this country. They reported at that time how distressed and degraded that condition was, and another Royal Commission, which has been sitting during the last five years, has also reported of that condition in almost exactly identical terms. So it is that a generation of these hard-handed toiling multitudes has passed away, and during that generation son has succeeded father in all this ill-requited labour, in all this degradation and distress, and all this has been going on in the midst of landowners themselves, under the official view of the authorities of the kingdom, and yet nothing has been done. Nay, so far from anything having been done, the position of these men is made worse by the fact that high prices have made it very difficult to purchase the comforts of life. The last Royal Commission states that the agricultural labourer was, on the whole, worse off than he was many years ago. I hold in my hands one or two authorities in reference to this question of the agricultural labourer, which I should like to read to you, because I think it necessary we as Englishmen should know what is going on in our own country under these great landowners. Sir George Grey, the late governor of New Zealand, who has seen humanity in many climes and under many circumstances, says :—"There is the clearest evidence to show that the position of the agricultural labourer is in some essential respects worse than perhaps for centuries has been the case." I wish to be very careful in giving you my authorities, for I know that what I am saying will be reported to-morrow in various papers in the country, and I challenge anybody on the other side to dispute the authorities I am giving. Sir Charles Trevelyan, a very eminent man—a man who has filled very important public offices, and the father of my valued friend, Mr. G. O. Trevelyan, who was connected with the abolition of purchase in the army—speaking on the agricultural labourer says :—"His ordinary subsistence is not sufficient to maintain him in the health and strength required for

the efficiency, and therefore the economy of labour; it is impossible for him to make any provision out of his scanty earnings for sickness and old age; and all he has to look forward to is a life of unintermitted toil, shut out from every hope of advancement, and ending with his being pensioned as a pauper on the poor rates." I am going to give you one other authority, and it is that of a man whose name is known throughout the kingdom. He is a clergyman of the Church of England, and a country rector as well as the son of a Duke—he is none other than the Rev. Lord Sydney Godolphin Osborne, who writes in the *Times* as "S.G.O." He says—"Sad and lengthened experience has convinced me that the producer of bread by the sweat of his brow, for his body's sake and his soul's sake, can be placed in no worse position than he is at home—in merry England, Christian England, England the nurse of industry, the very hotbed of philanthropy. Late, very late experience—knowledge acquired far and near from those in whom I can put trust—facts of which I am cognizant from sources which defy contradiction—all prove to me that in hundreds of our villages the social condition of man is below that of any country of which I have ever read." I shall not stop to dwell upon the position of the children and wives of these men—I will not speak of those fields where children, infants, seven, eight, and nine years of age—are working all the live-long day from five in the morning to seven at night—a pitiful state of existence—in order to take home to the house some paltry amount of wages. I will not dwell upon these pictures, but I would at all events speak of the houses or cottages in which these labourers—your fellow countrymen, these men of the soil, this portion of the agricultural interest, live. You must bear in mind that in almost every part of the country there are too few of these cottages. Landowners under the old system of poor's rates used to sweep down their cottages and drive their workmen to the neighbouring towns, in order that when their workmen were obliged to go upon the poor's rates, the cost of their relief might be thrown upon the towns instead of upon the country districts. Only a few years back that was done among the landowners in this part of the country, and at the present time a large number of labouring men live in Warrington and trudge for miles to their work in the rural parishes, because their employers have no cottages in which to house them. I have prepared some statistics to show that in most of the great districts of England the supply of cottages is abominably insufficient, but I will not read them all. I will refer to the testimony given by the Royal Commission to which I have alluded, a commission for inquiring into the employment of women and children in agriculture. Dr. Fraser was one of the commissioners. He is now the excellent Bishop of Manchester—a man who shows a great knowledge of his duties as a Bishop, as I understand them, and is constant in and out of season doing what he believes to be good among the people around him. Dr. Fraser was assistant commissioner for the counties of Norfolk, Essex, Sussex, and Gloucestershire. In one district he describes the cottages as "miserable," in a second as "deplorable," in a third as "detestable," and in a fourth as "a disgrace to a Christian community." Dr. Fraser further reports that "the majority of the cottages are deficient in almost

every requisite that should constitute a home for a Christian family in a civilised community ; ” and after describing the number of persons of all ages and of both sexes crowded into the single bedrooms of many of these wretched hovels, he says that “ human nature is degraded into something below the level of the swine. It is a hideous picture, and the picture is drawn from life.” Now, recalling Judge Longfield’s words that “ the land is the gift of the Creator of the world to mankind,” do you think it was the intention of the all-wise Creator that a few thousand families should monopolise the fruits of the soil in increasing rents from year to year, and that their lordly dwellings should be surrounded by a destitute multitude “ degraded into something below the level of the swine ” ? This is the result of what Cobden called the peasantry being divorced from the soil, and the wonder is that so many generations of these labourers have passed away before a Joseph Arch has arisen to declare their wrongs and to appeal to the national conscience for justice. I believe that the cry which is now coming from the agricultural districts will not be disregarded, but that the agricultural labourer will render important assistance to us in securing the freedom of the land. The question is, how are we to get rid of these serious evils ? The answer is very plain—it is by enabling capital to go into land. That is the way in which we may breathe life into the dry bones of the agricultural system. Just consider what capital has done for this county, for Yorkshire, and for all parts of England and Scotland where manufactories are established. What has it done since 1840—since free trade was established ? Look on every hand and you will find new iron works, cotton mills, and workshops of all descriptions rising up. You find more and more men being employed in these hives of industry, and all this is being done by capital. Since 1840 men have constantly been investing money in these different works, but it is not the rich alone who have done this. When a man has saved up a little money he has gone into a workshop, and some men, by saving up, have got a share in a cotton factory. We have had co-operative establishments, joint-stock companies formed, and as manufacturers have saved their money from year to year, they have enlarged their mills or built new ones. All that has created industry and employment, and we want the same thing to take place with regard to land. There is no difference between the manufacturer of corn and the manufacturer of cotton—you cannot manufacture corn without capital any more than you can manufacture cotton without capital. Then you may ask why it is that capital has not been devoted to the cultivation of the land, and I think I can show you in a few words. It is simply because land is not treated like any other description of property. Just imagine, supposing it were possible, that there was only a certain number of cotton mills in the kingdom, that they all belonged to one class of society, and could not be increased in number, do you think, if those cotton mills were let from year to year you would see anyone taking a mill to work it ? If he put in any machinery, if he made any improvements to increase his profits, the owner of the mill might, in the course of a year or two, come down upon him for an increased rent. Then he would also be under the liability to be turned out of the mill at a year’s notice, without any compensation

for all he had laid down in it. And do you suppose that capital would be put into a cotton mill under such circumstances? Yet that is precisely the position of the farming tenantry in this country; they have no security, in the vast majority of cases, for any outlay they may make for the improvement of the land. If we want the tenants of this country to put capital in the land we must have some great change in the land laws. We must get rid of the game laws. We must give the tenants a tenure in their land of such a nature that they cannot easily be disturbed. They must also have not only payment for unexhausted improvements, but if a man is occupying a number of acres of land—if he is doing the right thing by the land, and paying the rent—then I think he ought not to be turned out of his holding unless the landlord is prepared to compensate him by the payment of a number of years' rent. That is the principle of the Irish Land Bill, and I cannot see why a good thing for Ireland should not also be a good thing for us. If I may be allowed to give advice to agricultural tenants, I would say, if you want to be put in a much better position than you are now, you must begin to understand that you are to walk alone. If you think that by getting up associations in which the landowners take a prominent part, and in which the land agent pulls the strings, that you can get any great good, you are much mistaken. I remember a good story told by a farmer when we were advocating Free Trade. The landowners were then dreadfully afraid lest the repeal of the Corn Laws would bring down rents, and on one occasion a landlord said to a farmer, "You should not do this, because, you know, we are both pulling in the same boat." "Aye," said the farmer, "we are pulling in the same boat, but in different directions." So it is now with the farmer and his landlord. I would recommend farmers to see, now they have the ballot, whether they cannot better their position and look after their own interests. I would say to them in the words of O'Connell, "Hereditary bondsmen know ye not; who would be free, themselves must strike the blow." They have the power under the ballot, and I trust in subsequent elections there will be action on the part of the farmers that will lead to the protection of their own interests. With regard to the landlords, they cannot improve their estates, and I will tell you why. A great part of the land of this country is tied up so tightly that the landowner cannot deal with it as if it was his own. The reason is that the territorial aristocracy of this country have seen it so necessary to keep these big estates without having any divisions of them, that they take care to settle them upon their sons and upon his sons, from generation to generation. So the thing goes on, and so it is that each landowner has only a life interest in the land. As a matter of course, if he lays out money on his land that money comes out of his own pocket and goes for the benefit of his successor, and he is not often disposed to lay out money where it will not immediately benefit himself. In fact, he may not have the means; his estate may be heavily mortgaged and he may not be able to sell a part of the estate to pay off the mortgage and improve the rest. If he is a spendthrift he may become a bankrupt—he may be unable to pay his just debts. In that case the land is held in trust by the trustees in bankruptcy. They cannot sell it and pay the

man's debts ; they can only take his life interest, and when he dies the estate goes quite free to the next heir. As a matter of course, creditors do not like to lay out money upon the improvement of the estate, which may, at any time, go from them, and it is not likely they will do so. It is a fact that three quarters of the land is held under strict settlement, and so held that the landowners cannot, having no disposition, lay out capital to improve it. You will quite understand that if this kind of thing is continued you cannot have capital improving the land. You must have it still half cultivated with a peasantry starving because their labour does not bring them more than a few shillings a week. Well, now, what do we want to cure the evil ? First of all we must get rid of settlements of land, of the laws of primogeniture and the power of landowners to settle lands upon future generations. We must insist that the man who has land shall be able to deal with it as he pleases. On the one hand he shall have every inducement to lay out money for improving his own property, and on the other hand, if he is a spendthrift and bankrupt like the Duke of Newcastle, to meet his debts the land should be taken over by the creditors and sold to anyone who will buy it. If we get a certain amount of land in the market by getting rid of settlements and the law of primogeniture, we should have to take care that the land could easily be bought and sold. At present you cannot buy a piece of land without great difficulty and expense, but in any other country you can buy land as easily as you can buy a ship or any commodity. In other countries every portion of land is registered, together with the name of the holder, and as soon as he sells it the sale is recorded in the Government office with the name of the purchaser. The result is that it is a perfectly easy matter to make a purchase or effect a sale, and instead of its costing to buy £100 worth of land, £5, £10, £15, or £25, you have the purchase registered for a few shillings. So you might have that advantage under a new system. The great evil is to be found in our having these enormous properties, and in having so few very small properties in the kingdom. We differ from all the other nations of Europe in this respect. I don't know a kingdom in Europe that is not beforehand with us in the matter of these land laws. With a population of 30,000,000, we have about 30,000 large-sized landowners. In France there are 5,000,000 of rural proprietors, and of these 4,000,000 cultivate their own land. In Prussia there are upwards of 2,000,000 landowners, the greater part being small proprietors, and in Belgium, Italy, Sweden, Austria, and Germany—in fact, everywhere throughout Europe, except at home, the entire country is covered with small proprietors—with a peasant proprietary, cultivating their own land. When we point to the Continent and say, “Look at the land system there ; see how much better it is than ours,” we are met with a bugbear, as we always are whenever we want reform, and we are told that the system existing in France, by which, at a man's death, it is necessary to divide his property equally amongst his children, is a dreadful thing, and would never do in this country. I do not want to have that in England, but with proper measures we can get the good without the evil of that system. But let me say—and I speak with good authority—that of all systems ours is far the worst, and it would be far

better to have the French system than to continue in our present position in this matter—to have a large number of peasant proprietors than to have land tied up in the way it is here. Let me say that in France public opinion is entirely in favour of their system. All the eminent statesmen are in favour of a great number of landed proprietors, and if it was not too late I could quote valuable evidence on that subject. But I shall not dwell upon it, because I am not advocating the system adopted in France. What I do advocate is this, that we should, by legislative means, do everything in our power to encourage a division of the soil of this country into more hands. I can tell you that there is only one testimony in reference to this system abroad, and that is, if a man holds his own farm he puts an amount of labour on that farm, and pays an amount of attention to his farm, making it fruitful under circumstances that, unless he had great personal interest in promoting the fertility of the land, could not take place. In Switzerland, on the ledges of the rocks, men, by their labour, grow corn and grass. In Belgium, on sandy and sterile soils on the border of the sea, there are small proprietors who are constantly digging with the spade and gathering with great care any little manure they can apply to their lands, and they manage to bring those desolate tracts to comparative fertility. And what is the consequence? The Government requested, two or three years ago, the representatives of England in foreign courts to report as to the effect of the land tenure in Europe. These reports, written by members of the British missions and embassies, are uniformly in favour of this system of a small proprietary. In Italy our consul reports that “an owner alone will give the loving labour requisite to render the rocky slopes productive.” In Prussia our representative tells the Foreign Office “that owing to the division of land pauperism is very rare, and beggars are unknown.” In Hesse Darmstadt, a country of small proprietors, our representative tells us that “the able-bodied pauper is a being altogether unknown.” But I shall not dwell longer upon this state of things on the Continent. I have dwelt upon it so long because I am anxious to show that it is very important we should, if possible, apply the same principle here. You will naturally say—How is that to be done? I will tell you how in my judgement it should be done. I have told you that settlements ought to be got rid of and that land should be held in fee simple and not as a life estate, and that the sale of land should be made as easy and as cheap as any other commodity. I go further and say after we have adopted these measures the Government should force the sale of all land held in Mortmain—that is to say all land held in trust by our colleges, universities, and other charitable institutions. I say that Government should force the sale of all land held in Mortmain, that the farmers cultivating the land, ought to have pre-emption in the purchase of it at a given rate, and, as was proposed as a wise and statesmanlike measure by Mr. Bright in relation to Ireland, assistance should be given in order to enable farmers occupying the land to purchase their holdings, the security of these estates being given for the advance of the money which the farmer would pay back to the Government principal and interest in say, 40 years. That would at once bring into the market

and bring into the possession of moderate proprietors no less an amount than one-sixth of the property of this kingdom. I say beyond that all the property in this kingdom which is so heavily mortgaged that the proprietor cannot do justice to it ought to be brought into an Encumbered Estate Court as in Ireland, that encumbered estates should be sold, and that, in the same way, farmers holding them should have the pre-emption of purchase. I believe that these two measures would at once have the effect of creating a large number of proprietors of the soil in this kingdom, who would take their own farms and work those farms in a way that no other means could lead to, and we should have great increase of production and a great advance in the prosperity of the country. Before I sit down let me say that this is not confiscation. We are not wishing to take anybody's property away from them without paying for it. What we say is—this property, if property in land, must be held subject to trusts and conditions, and if they are not fulfilled we say we must deal with it by law so as to secure their being fulfilled. Mr. Disraeli, speaking to the students at Glasgow, spoke of a disturbing spirit which is now rising like a moaning wind in Europe, and which he said may possibly become a raging storm. Gentlemen, this is the old story ; this is the old bugbear policy of the Tories. He talks about this moaning wind, and he wishes people of property in this country to suppose that there is some power, some storm coming over us that may perhaps destroy their property. Well, gentlemen, I will tell Mr. Disraeli, and I will tell the owners of property, how they may secure their property. I will again point to the continent, and I will say that if property is held in a large number of hands these peasant proprietors will act as a sort of lightning conductor, which will avert from the great holders of property any danger that may threaten them in the storm. Let me say that every Government on the continent is alive to that fact ; that they all, as a Conservative measure, as far as possible help the creation of these small properties. That has been the policy of most of the Governments of the continent during the last 70 years, and our representatives abroad in their reports to the Foreign Office are uniform in their testimony that the existence of these small properties is the great safeguard of all order and the rights of property in these kingdoms. This is not the first time we Liberals have had to initiate a true Conservative policy. If these great property owners in former years had had their way and refused the repeal of the Corn Laws, they would have exposed this country to a dreadful revolution, that might have destroyed the interests of property. They themselves now know that the repeal of the Corn Laws was for their advantage and they admit it. Still I tell those great property owners, and I tell every property owner who hears my voice, if you would have a Conservative measure and would save the rights of property, then get as many people interested in property as you can. Remember the opinion which was expressed by the greatest political economist who ever lived—Adam Smith—who, speaking of the creation and distribution of wealth said—“ The accumulation of wealth makes a people rich ; the distribution makes a people happy and prosperous.” That is our policy, gentlemen—not confiscation, not robbery. As in the past our policy has led to

great prosperity and advancement on the part of the manufacturing inhabitants of this country, so the policy which we want now to inaugurate will lead to great prosperity and happiness amongst the tillers of the soil. That prosperity and happiness will act and re-act one class upon the other; you on your side will have cheaper food, and they on the other side will have increased comfort and greater demand for their labour—they being in such a position will be able to purchase a larger amount of your manufactures, and so the prosperity and welfare of our country will be promoted. And why should we not do this? What is the reason we should withhold from the people this great blessing? Is it because we must support a great territorial aristocracy? Must we go back to the state of things wished for in that old Tory rhyme by Lord John Manners, when a number of years ago he said:—

“Let laws and learning, trade and commerce die,
But leave us still our old nobility?”

No, that must not be our policy. We believe not in the privileges of the few—we believe in the prosperity and happiness of the many. Remember what Cobden said would be the effect of free trade in land. I have endeavoured, feebly perhaps, to give you some reasons for the policy I have advocated. If I had gone fully into the subject I should have to occupy hours, because as I have gone into it more and more light and more evidence springs up on every hand. I have been unable to do that, but I must hope that I may have thrown into your minds that which will germinate and bring forth fruit in after time. I can only hope I have done something to prepare your minds for that struggle in which we are about to enter. I cannot say that there will be any measure introduced into Parliament this next session that may affect this question—I do not know what may be the case—but I believe no Government and no Parliament can prevent this question being taken up by the people of this country. The question before it is settled may do as the Free Trade question did—it may dissolve Parliaments and upset Governments, but if we have before us the object at which we aim—if we remember Cobden's prediction that our success will be of such incalculable advantage to the country—then, gentlemen, I trust we shall go on against every obstacle. It will no doubt happen in a very short time that the present Parliament will be dissolved, and it will depend very much upon the composition of the next Parliament what shall be the “new departure” of the Liberal party. Gentlemen, it will be for you to pass upon me the verdict you may think fit when I ask you again for your confidence. You may refuse it, but if you do not—if you give me your confidence, I do not hesitate to say that, as a member of the new Parliament, it will be one of my greatest objects and my first efforts to use my voice and the power you have entrusted to me to achieve for this country free trade in land, and those advantages for the labouring classes in England which will result from it.

No. IV.

Speech delivered in the House of Commons on the motion for the Second Reading of the Customs and Inland Revenue Bill May 15th, 1876.

[Mr. Rylands rose to move as an amendment "that this House regrets that the progressive increase of expenditure recommended by her Majesty's Government has led to the proposal to add to the Income-tax in the present year."] The terms of the resolution which I have the honour to propose are of so moderate a character that I venture to appeal in its favour to hon. gentlemen on the other side of the House. I am aware that there are upon the other side of the House many gentlemen who are prepared, under any circumstances, to support the conclusions to which the Government have arrived, but it seems to me that this is an occasion when the public interests are very much involved, and I am disposed to think that there must be some Conservative members who look with dissatisfaction upon the large expenditure which is going on from year to year, and the rapid increase of taxation, and who may be willing to support the resolution as a means of protesting against the course taken by the Government. It appears to me that this is a very fitting occasion for them to depart from the almost uniform docility which marks the course of the supporters of the Government, and to express their opinions in favour of some definite proposal upon the subject; but should they decline to give me any support, and my proposal is in consequence rejected, as other motions have been, by the majority of the House; at all events I shall have the satisfaction of knowing and believing that whatever might be the case with questions like the Royal Titles Bill, there is no doubt whatever that a majority of the House which may go against a motion of this character will not represent a majority out of doors, and that many of the constituents of hon. gentlemen opposite will have viewed with the greatest possible dissatisfaction the great increase of expenditure which has taken place under a Conservative Government. They will very reasonably complain that in the matter of the Income-tax they have been deceived by their party. I hope that on this side of the House I shall not need to use many arguments to induce my hon. friends to support the resolution. I am quite aware that some of my hon. friends have questioned the policy of bringing forward the subject at all, and for this reason, that the Government in the matter of expenditure are cutting their own throats so very quickly that the Liberal party ought not to interfere, but should stand by as amused and interested spectators until the "happy dispatch" is completed. I do not deny that there is some force in that argument. I am not prepared to assert that this prospect is a disagreeable one, and it is by no means a matter of annoyance to me that her Majesty's Government and the Conservative party which came into power in 1874 with such great expectations, should so rapidly lose the confidence of the country. If the Government itself had alone been involved I should not have hesitated to adopt the advice of my hon. friends, but unfortunately it is the people who are mainly concerned, and it appears to me that we, as a Liberal party,

occupying the benches of the opposition, are bound to protest against the mischievous policy of the Government, and against an extravagant and needless expenditure which we view with alarm, and which is entailing unnecessary burdens upon the people. In criticising the Budget measures of the right hon. gentleman, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, I do not wish for a moment to make any complaint against the right hon. gentleman himself. I am quite willing, with the rest of the House, to admit that the speech of the right hon. gentleman in introducing the budget was both clear and able, and that the views he stated were moderate and candid. My complaints are against the spending departments of the Crown, represented by responsible Ministers in Parliament, and if the spending departments cannot keep down the enormous expenditure, we must be prepared to pay the penalty in the form of additional taxation. I quite agree with the Chancellor of the Exchequer that the present taxes would not be sufficient to meet the enlarged expenditure for the coming year. The right hon. gentleman's estimates of the Revenue for 1876-7 were considered to be moderate, but I fear that moderate as they were they will not be reached. The right hon. gentleman had the first warning of the decline of the revenue in the diminution of consumption in regard to the excise, and it is unnecessary to remind the House that the excise is the first branch of the revenue which is struck by any decline of consumption. That decline in consumption and depreciation of trade which struck the excise in the first instance, is rapidly extending to the customs and other branches of revenue. Speaking from personal knowledge, I venture to say that at the present moment the prospects of trade in the country are of a most gloomy character. If the Government were to ask "the man in the street," they would be told that every branch of industry is looking gloomy. I happen to be connected with two of the largest trading industries in the kingdom—the iron and coal trade, and therefore I can speak from personal experience; and I am able to say, in connection with these trades, that many of the iron works and collieries in the country are stopped, or working short time. The capital employed in these businesses is unremunerative, and wages are falling. Then again, the same depression attends the cotton trade, and I believe that there never was a period when stocks had increased so largely. Unless a great demand springs up for the product of our mills in various parts of the world, the only consequence of the present state of things must be that many of the cotton mills will be compelled to close altogether, while others will have to work short time. This is the state of the manufacturing industry in Lancashire; and from Halifax and Yorkshire generally the accounts are just as bad. And there is another important branch of national industry which, I am informed, has recently suffered considerable losses. I mean the agricultural interest, which is suffering from there having been two bad seasons in succession. Hon. gentlemen are much better able to speak of this than I am, but some of my friends who are landowners have assured me that the last two seasons have been disastrous to farmers in certain parts of the country. I have been told by an hon. friend, who was formerly a member of this House, that on his estates, for the first time in his

experience, his tenants were unable to pay their rents at Christmas, and he had not yet received them. I ask what all this means? We have in every department of industry a failing demand for goods, and a failing demand for labour, and that means that there will be less money earned in wages and spent with the shopkeepers and traders, and that there will be less return upon the money employed in these various branches of industry. This, in its turn, will affect securities in railways, banks, and other means of investing money. The pinch must come upon these as well as upon the regular trades and businesses, and thousands of families will then suffer from reduced incomes arising from such investments. All these circumstances point to a very diminished consumption of the various commodities which pay duty to the Exchequer. I admit this expectation, and regret that I am obliged to paint it in such unfortunate colours, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer, looking at the diminished trade and the diminished consumption, could not do otherwise than form the opinion that it is impossible for him to rely upon any increase in the revenue. But there is a far stronger reason why in the midst of this depression of trade there should be no addition made to the taxation of the country, because diminished receipts in the Exchequer mean not only diminished luxuries to the richer classes, diminished comforts to persons of smaller income, but they mean absolute privation and distress to the working part of the population. I think under these circumstances all classes have reason to complain of the expenditure sanctioned by the Government which, in a period where there is so much distress and depression of trade, and the probability of still further difficulties of a commercial character, has led to the proposal of increased taxation. But there is one class which I think have special reason to complain of the Government, and that is the farming class, and I will tell the House why I think the farmers have special reason to complain of the Government. When right hon. and hon. gentlemen went through the country in the election of 1874, they issued a number of addresses to the farmers and other classes of the community, and those addresses contained a number of promises as to what would happen in the interest of the farmers and the agricultural classes in the event of a Conservative Government coming into power. In point of fact, the addresses of hon. gentlemen opposite were so many promissory notes by which they undertook to pay at a future period certain considerations in the form of public boons to various classes in return for their support. In country districts these promissory notes were freely circulated and credulously received, and now that the time has come to redeem them they have been dishonoured. No effects are reported, and unfortunately the farmers, who are ignorant of regular business habits, and very credulous, have accepted these promises in good faith, and now find that they are the innocent dupes of the gentlemen who circulated these accommodation bills. I observed a few days since in the *Times* an interesting account of a meeting held on the occasion of the presentation of a testimonial to the hon. member for South Norfolk (Mr. C. S. Read). Many gentlemen, distinguished in agriculture, were present; a number of speeches were delivered, and among others the

chairman, himself a Conservative, made a remarkable speech, in which he dwelt at some length upon the shortcomings of the Government, especially in regard to their promises to the farmers, and the promises contained in the Queen's Speech in reference to the relations between landlord and tenant; and upon the way in which the farmers had been disappointed of their expectations from the advent of the Conservatives to power. He spoke of the indifference of the Government to the interests of farmers, and of the delusive promise in the Queen's Speech with respect to the relations of landlord and tenant, followed by the Agricultural Holdings Act, and said "They had taken fright at their own Act, and, through the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, had contracted themselves out of the Act to the universal surprise and dissatisfaction of all who looked to the Government to support their own production." The farmers have not only been deceived but they are absolutely distressed. They have appealed to their friends sitting on the Tory benches to relieve them in their distress, and instead of getting relief, they are met by an additional penny of income tax. I think the farmers may well be disappointed with their allies on the Treasury bench, and that they are likely to say of them—

"It is all very well to dissemble your love,
But why did you kick us down stairs?"

I hope the farmers, bearing in mind what is taking place, will revert to the course taken by agriculturists in former years. In former generations the farmers were the backbone of the Whig party, in favour of peace, retrenchment, and reform, and I am not without hope that, finding on which side their interests are really bound up, and being naturally dissatisfied at the manner in which the Conservatives have broken their promises, they will return to their allegiance to the party which has, in the long run, best served their interest. I need not dwell further upon the case of the victims of a misplaced confidence, but I cannot pass over the singular means by which the Chancellor of the Exchequer seeks to relieve the pressure of the new burden of taxation and to gild the pill of the additional 1d. Income Tax. He extends the system of exemptions, and he does so in a manner which I think is fairly open to animadversion. But he does at the same time recognize a principle which I am not disposed to quarrel with. By means of these exemptions the right hon. gentleman extends the reductions upon small incomes, and I believe that the principle is right. In point of fact the Chancellor of the Exchequer has created a sliding scale of the rate of tax according to the amount of income. In the *Times* a few weeks ago a letter appeared in which the writer calculated what would be the effect of these reductions upon small incomes, and he showed that incomes of £150 a year would pay income tax at the rate of 3d. in the pound per year; up to £180, 1d. in the pound; up to £250, 1½d. in the pound; up to £350, 2d. in the pound, and £400 and higher 3d. in the pound. What strikes me at once is this, why should we stop at the point of £400? If the principle is good at all it may very well be carried much further, because gentlemen with £100,000 a year could pay 2s. in the pound

more easily than a gentleman with £10,000 could pay 10d. in the pound, and the possessor of £1,000 a year would find 6d. in the pound not more burdensome than a man with £400 a year would find 3d. in the pound. I think that is a principle of a sliding scale, which is worthy of the consideration of the House and of the country. The principle is already recognised as far as incomes up to £400 a year are concerned, and I sincerely hope that on some future occasion larger incomes will be treated in the same way. But the main point I wish to impress upon the House in connection with matters of exemption is this:—That however you manipulate a tax in this direction, you cannot increase the burden of taxation without affecting all classes of the community. You may exercise great ingenuity in fitting the burden upon the back of an animal so as to avoid unnecessary galling, but the beast has still to carry the weight. You may vote taxation, no doubt, in an ingenious manner so as to prevent its falling upon any class oppressively, but the burden still exists and the money which it represents must of necessity come out of the pockets of the people. Every stroke of the Exchequer force pump that carries £1,000,000 into the Revenue must reach down by the power of suction even to the very depth of the population, and notwithstanding your exemptions the £1,000,000 now to be levied must withdraw money which would otherwise be employed as wages, in the promotion of works of industry, and in fostering trade, and while you may only circumscribe the comforts of people of small incomes, you will add to the bitter cup of privation which is likely to be the portion of the poorest classes during the coming autumn and winter. The question is, where are we to stop? What guarantee have we that the expenditure of £78,000,000 a year would not go on increasing next year? So far from having any guarantee, I think experience is all the other way, and instead of the amount being kept within £78,000,000, it is most likely to be largely increased in the future. Her Majesty's Ministers come down to the House, make speeches, and say they require a certain sum of money for the service of the year, and the practice of a Conservative Government has always been to exceed the money voted by the House. In 1867-8, Lord Derby's Government exceeded their estimates by £1,100,000 exclusive of the cost of the Abyssinian War; in 1874-5 there was an excess of expenditure over estimates of £350,000; and last year, as the Chancellor of the Exchequer told us, there was an excess of £900,000. I think it was a humiliating confession on the part of the right hon. gentleman when he said, in introducing the Budget, that the supplementary estimates were very considerably in excess of anything he had anticipated when he brought in his Budget last year; but what did that mean? It meant that there was great slackness in the control of expenditure in the spending departments, or a great want of ability to determine what the proper expenditure of the coming year should be. In either case the House of Commons is placed in this position, that they can have no confidence in the estimates of the Government, because if the Chancellor of the Exchequer had not had the slightest idea that the expenditure of last year would have been so large, how can they refrain from doubting that

there might be a similarly increased expenditure during the present year? His only apology and excuse was that unforeseen outlays may arise under any Government. No doubt that is the case, but I contend that unforeseen outlays of an ordinary character ought to be met by the savings of the year. That was done in former years by the Liberal Government. In several instances the savings considerably more than balanced the unforeseen outlays. There could be no greater contrast than the course taken in this respect by the present Government and by their predecessors. The present Government, so far from making any saving, commensurate with their expenditure, are constantly creating excitement and astonishment by the extraordinary expenditure into which they plunge the country. Unfortunately we have at the head of the Government a right hon. gentleman who appears to have the peculiar faculty of creating unexpected outlays to carry out some magnificent policy, which in the first instance excites a good deal of public attention and public admiration, but which ends in adding very considerably to the burdens upon the finances of the country. The right hon. gentleman has invariably brought forward some great and unlooked for policy. Indeed, it strikes me that the proposals of the right hon. gentleman are very much in the nature of fireworks. They are brilliant while they last, but very evanescent, very useless, and unfortunately they cost a great deal. And there have always been the same characteristics marking the great undertakings of the Prime Minister. They have been hastily entered into without due consideration—they have been carried out in an unbusinesslike manner and with reckless expenditure—they have been based upon great miscalculations of the ultimate cost, and they have ended in imposing great burdens upon the nation. In 1867 the Abyssinian war fulfilled all these conditions—it was entered into precipitately, whilst Parliament was not sitting; it was carried out in an unbusiness-like manner, with a reckless waste in expenditure which entailed a total cost of nearly £9,000,000, despite the solemn assurances of the right hon. gentleman the Prime Minister that the expenditure which he at first estimated at only £2,000,000, would at the very outside not exceed £3,500,000. When the right hon. gentleman went out of office, as I suppose he will do some day again, he left to his successors the duty of providing no less than £6,300,000 to pay the outstanding debts created by his Abyssinian policy. In 1868 another proposition was made, which also was adopted very hastily, and carried through with great precipitance. It has entailed upon the country great burthens which even now affect the Exchequer. I allude, of course, to the purchase of the Telegraphs, a dazzling scheme, painted by the Government in glowing colours. They said the cost would be only £4,000,000, and that there would be a surplus income of £280,000 a year. The principal and interest were to be paid off in 29 years, when the country would enjoy the full financial blessings of the scheme. This was the prediction uttered by the prophet of the Government, the then Chancellor of the Exchequer. And what have been the financial results of this promising scheme? The money expended up to the present time has amounted to £10,000,000, and now forms a serious burden upon the Exchequer. Up to last year there has been a deficiency

upon the working expenses. Not a penny of the principal has been paid, and not a penny even of interest upon outlay has been paid until last year, when there was a credit of £40,000 over the expenses. Then there was the blundering and unbusiness-like way in which the transaction was carried out. As usual with right hon. gentlemen opposite, the bargain was hastily and inconsiderately made. It was a bad bargain. They paid a price which was very much too high, and not only so, they paid for what they did not get. They supposed that they had purchased the freehold of the way-leaves on the railway lines, but they had only got some short leases and agreements, and the country has already had to pay, in compensation to railway companies, several hundred thousand pounds, and are likely to have to pay nearly a million altogether, because of this blunder in their bargain, which very appropriately bears the date of April 1st, 1868. The purchase of the Suez Canal Shares was a repetition of the blunder committed with regard to the Telegraphs. I am not going to raise any question as to whether it was a wise policy or not; all that I have to consider is the financial effect of the proceeding. And I say that this Canal purchase has been a hasty policy, adopted without due consideration, and carried out in an unbusiness-like manner, without any regard to financial considerations. It has been a bad bargain from a money point of view, because you have given a great deal more for these shares than they were worth in the market, and a great deal more than anybody else would have given for them. I believe that the Government were deceived in supposing that some people in Paris were prepared to buy the shares. The French holders of Egyptian floating debt deceived the Government then for their own interests, and they have, I think, managed to use the British Government since, to promote their stock-jobbing schemes. I defy the Government to prove that anybody else wanted them, or that anybody else would have paid so large a sum for them. I have reason to believe that the Canal Shares were hawked about Paris for £3,800,000, with a guaranteed interest of 10 to 12 per cent., which I need not tell the House represents under £2,000,000 at 5 per cent. as the value, but the Government gave twice as much as they were worth, and it would be seen from the papers on the table of the House that the Khedive thought it a perfect Godsend that John Bull had so much money, and was so ready to part with it in paying for his whistle. I hope that the purchase will not involve us in any further loss. Some great stroke of policy might be sprung upon us at any moment by the Prime Minister. We might have a Commissioner carrying to Egypt some sort of guarantee on the part of this country in order to save the £200,000 a year, and thus involve ourselves in some great muddle of Egyptian finance. I am perfectly alarmed when I come to consider how the Government have been imposed upon by the French holders of Egyptian Treasury Bills. If the House could, by a committee, trace what has been going on between France and this country—if they could show how the strings had been pulled by a gang of financial swindlers in Paris and answered from the Treasury Bench—if they could trace the loss and suffering occasioned in this country by fluctuations of Egyptian stock produced by inconsiderate utterances of right hon. gentlemen

opposite, they would be perfectly shocked, and regret that they had ever been mixed up in Egyptian finance. Well, I am afraid we have not got to the end of our loss in this Egyptian matter, and the probability is that when the Liberal party come again into office—as come they will, notwithstanding the despondent expressions in the East Retford speech of the right hon. gentleman the member for the University of London—my right hon. friend the member for Pontefract, or whoever else is the Chancellor of the Exchequer under a Liberal Government, will find his difficulties increased by the financial burdens left to him by the present Government. But leaving out of consideration the possibility of extraordinary occasions of expenditure which may be sprung upon us at any moment by the right hon. gentleman the Prime Minister, the ordinary expenditure recommended by her Majesty's Government is sufficiently alarming. The ordinary expenditure is progressing at the rate of £1,500,000 a year, and already the newspapers are speculating upon its reaching £80,000,000 next year. You will then be brought face to face with two alternatives—either the sinking fund will have to be done away with or an additional 1d. will have to be put on the Income Tax. Indeed, you may be driven to that alternative by the failure of estimated receipts at the Exchequer during the present year. And then I think I can venture to predict what will occur. The sinking fund of the Chancellor of the Exchequer will disappear. I think we had some premonition of this when the right hon. gentleman spoke about the sinking fund not being like the laws of the Medes and Persians. So soon as you are obliged to lay on additional taxes you cannot maintain the sinking fund. Nobody can have listened to the speech of the Chancellor of the Exchequer without feeling his pet scheme has had a considerable struggle for existence, when he had to consider the necessity of putting on an additional 1d. to the Income Tax this year; but it would have been too absurd to have given up the sinking fund the very first year of its existence, and so it was saved, but it is doubtful whether it will stand the pressure of another year. There is a strong feeling in this country that taxation ought not to be laid on for the purpose of paying off the national debt. What we want is thrift and economy in the national finances. The expenditure ought to be kept within the estimates. If the Government had followed the example of its predecessors they might, without any of the pretentious arrangement of a sinking fund, have done a great deal to diminish the national debt. During the five years of the administration of the right hon. gentleman the member for Greenwich, notwithstanding net remissions of taxation amounting to £12,500,000, there was a reduction of the debt of £26,000,000 over and above the stock and terminable annuities created for the purchase of the telegraphs, and on account of fortifications and army localisation. The contrast between the late Government and the present in these respects is perfectly amazing. They are borrowing with one hand, while they profess to be paying off the debt with the other, and, at the same time, they are increasing their expenditure, whilst the revenue is declining. The late Government remitted taxes and reduced the debt. The present Government have increased the debt and are laying on taxes. All this is only a repetition of an old tale. When the

right hon. gentleman the Prime Minister came into office in 1866 he found a surplus of about £2,000,000 and an expenditure of £66,000,000. When he went out of office at the end of 1868 the expenditure had increased to £72,000,000, and a deficit was left of £2,000,000. Again, in 1874, when he came into office, he found a splendid surplus of nearly £6,000,000 and an expenditure of £71,000,000, and he has managed to get rid of anything like a surplus. I am afraid that we will never see a surplus again whilst the right hon. gentleman is in office. The Prime Minister, in 1874, found the expenditure at £71,000,000, and he has carried it up to the unprecedented amount in time of peace of £78,000,000. If hon. gentlemen opposite think this is a true Conservative policy, I venture to differ with them. It is a very different policy from that which was pursued by the Conservative party in former years. I recollect the time when, at the head of that party, was a distinguished statesman who kept down all unnecessary expenditure, and who exerted his great abilities and influence in promoting measures for the welfare of the people at large. I, of course, allude to the late Sir Robert Peel, who, in one of his last speeches at the close of his distinguished career in 1850, gave this House some important advice. He said :

“ I believe that in time of peace we must, by our retrenchment, consent to incur some risk. I venture to say that if you choose to have all the garrisons of all your colonial possessions in a complete state, and to have all your fortifications secure against attack, no amount of annual expenditure will be sufficient to accomplish your object.”

The principle which Sir Robert Peel laid down in 1850 applies equally to the great military and naval preparations of the present day, and he would equally have condemned the present enormous expenditure. It is a misfortune to this country that the high place in Her Majesty's councils which was, in former years, occupied by that illustrious statesman, is now filled by a prime minister of so different a character, and who supports so opposite a policy. Although called a Conservative policy, I look upon it as a dangerous policy. It is sapping away the foundations upon which the progress and prosperity of this country depend. It may do in a period of fair weather, but it will not stand the pressure of adversity. The interests of all classes of society are bound up in the wise and economical administration of the national finances. The burden of taxation may help to lose the commercial superiority of this nation, exposed as it is to the increasing fierceness of the competition of other countries. There is also the danger that in a period of public distress, owing to the want of employment, the spectacle of overgrown national establishments, and of large sums lavished upon a multitude of unnecessary servants of the Crown, upon pensions and superannuations, and upon “ bloated armaments,” will add bitterness to privation, and will alienate the affections of the people from the institutions of the country.

No. V.

Speech at a Liberal Meeting in the Public Hall, Warrington, Feb. 5, 1879.

Mr. Chairman and gentlemen,—It has unfortunately been the case that for the last three years the attention of this country has been almost entirely directed to foreign affairs. I must say that I think that has been a subject of great regret ; and that it has been a matter of much disadvantage to this country that the mind of its inhabitants should be entirely occupied with affairs having reference to other parts of the world, and that matters having regard to our own affairs at home have been, to a great extent, neglected. I observe that the Tory papers, extending all along the whole scale of respectability from the *Times* at the top to the *Daily Telegraph* at the bottom—are now saying that we ought to give up discussing foreign affairs ; that the controversies with regard to the Eastern Question are closed—the matter they say is settled—and that it is, therefore, no use discussing what is irrevocable. Now, Mr. Chairman, if it were the fact that this Eastern Question were entirely closed and if the matter were entirely irrevocable and the controversy had come to an end, I should still say that the Government which during the last three years have taken a course of foreign policy of a nature which, in our judgment, has degraded the character and the reputation of the British people—a course which has given the power of Britain in aid of one of the most infamous and degraded, and the most cruel despotisms on the face of the earth ; a policy which has refused to use the British arm of strength in the support of freedom and liberty on behalf of struggling races who were seeking to obtain their freedom, the policy which, while pretending to resist the oppression of Russia, has been such as to strengthen the power of that country in the East, and to weaken the means of Europe for resisting any advance on the part of that power. I say that a policy which is open to all these charges, is of such a character that we cannot allow it to drop, we cannot close this controversy until a Government, which has so acted in the name of Great Britain, and dishonoured, as we believe, the fair fame of our country, is brought to the bar of public opinion at the general election ; and then let the people pronounce its doom. But, gentlemen, unfortunately the controversy is not settled. Settled ! Why, this “Peace with honour” policy that was flaunted before the eyes of the country when the Earl of Beaconsfield and Lord Salisbury came from Berlin, is no settlement of the great questions that disturbed Europe. Some of the greatest elements of disturbance remain. What ! do you suppose when, by means of the treaty of Berlin, you have refused freedom to the struggling millions of important nationalities, and replaced, by the influence of England, under the control of Turkey, not less than one million and a half of Bulgarians who have been struggling during the whole of these atrocities for freedom—do you suppose that can last ? Do you suppose that Greece will rest satisfied ? that Albania will be contented to be under the control of Turkey ? The question is not settled. It is a mere temporary expedient ; it is merely

skimmed over ; all the elements of discontent remain ; and at any moment you may have the flames of dissatisfaction bursting forth again in the Eastern provinces—no doubt we shall be told fomented by Russia. But, gentlemen, it needs no fomenting to cause such elements to manifest themselves in insurrection when nations are struggling for freedom. Well, it is the policy of Lord Beaconsfield to say that all these movements for freedom are instigated by somebody outside, and are the work of members of secret societies. Of course they are the work of secret societies. Do you suppose that people would conspire in public against the existence of any great overruling power? Of course they conspire in secret. Again they will rise against an oppressor, and again we shall have the Eastern Question opened ; and again it will have to be decided whether England will hold forth her hands to assist in fastening the chains of Turkey upon the neck of Christian populations, or whether she will use her immense influence in aid of Christianity and freedom ; in aid of national and commercial progress ; and I hope that when that time comes again, as come it may soon, we shall have a Government represented not by a man who has no sympathy with freedom, progress, or commerce, but we shall be represented by a Government headed by a man of great human sympathy, of great human feeling, one who will hold forth the hand of encouragement to struggling and oppressed nationalities,—in fact, that we shall be represented by William Ewart Gladstone, who has hitherto borne the flag of the Liberal party to such transcendent triumphs. Unfortunately, that is not the case now, and therefore I say we cannot cease to speak on this subject, though it is, no doubt, a misfortune that we have so repeatedly to deal with it. Personally, I dislike questions of intervention. Certainly I dislike questions of intervention on the part of this country quite as much as my friend Mr. McMinnies. I dislike to have to discuss questions of foreign policy quite as much as he does, but we are bound to debate these questions. But why are we so bound? Because we have a Government that goes all over the world in a sort of vain search for fancied British interests, and neglects the great British interests that lie at its own door. Lord Beaconsfield reminds me of a man who, going away from his own home at night, follows a will-o'-th'-wisp through a dark stretch of country, until he is ultimately landed in a swamp. That seems to me a proper manner in which to describe the policy which Lord Beaconsfield adopts in relation to British interests. And why does our present Prime Minister adopt this policy—this mischievous and turbulent foreign policy? It so happens that we are able to quote Lord Beaconsfield's opinions on this very subject, when he was Mr. Disraeli. Twenty years ago, in the House of Commons, Mr. Disraeli brought a charge against Lord Palmerston to the effect that he had no domestic policy. What Mr. Disraeli really said was that Lord Palmerston, having no domestic policy of his own, endeavoured by his foreign policy to divert the attention of the people of this country from affairs at home, and contrived, by his restless foreign policy, to divert attention from the domestic measures which he ought to introduce. Mr. Disraeli said that the policy of Lord Palmerston was turbulent abroad, in order that he might be quiet and unassailed at home ; and

this, he said, was accomplished by a system which meant increased expenditure, large taxation, and the neglect of internal administrative reforms. Could anything be a more admirable description of the present Government? Am I not justified in saying—

“I thank thee, Jew, for teaching me that word.”

In fact this is a most accurate description of the action of Her Majesty's present Government. And let me tell you, gentlemen, that the fact that Lord Beaconsfield, when Mr. Disraeli, condemned Lord Palmerston's turbulent foreign policy, is no proof that that he actually disapproved of it. Now there is nothing more marked in the character of the Premier than this—that during his long career he has never allowed any consideration of honour, of consistency, or of political principle, to prevent him attacking a political opponent. I have no doubt in my own mind that Mr. Disraeli was always in favour of a turbulent and aggressive foreign policy; and I think that no one can look at his early novels and read the views which are there expressed, without seeing that on the one hand he approves of a statesman diverting public opinion from affairs at home by great undertakings, and he also looks upon those great foreign undertakings on the part of statesmen as furnishing the highest credit, and being the most brilliant path of honour. Not only did Mr. Disraeli in his early novels, and in other ways, give evidence of his disposition to take this line in foreign affairs, but my friend Mr. McMinnies has alluded to the fact that in the manifesto that he issued in 1874, Mr. Disraeli condemned Mr. Gladstone for giving so much attention to home affairs, and he said it would be very much better if we had “a spirited foreign policy.” So that you see we had fair warning; and yet, in spite of that warning it was very difficult for the people to understand what Mr. Disraeli really was. I remember, immediately after the general election of 1874, a right honourable gentleman—Mr. Baxter, the member for Montrose—a man of great ability and of long Parliamentary experience, saying in a speech at Dundee or Montrose, that he thought it was not a bad thing that the Tories had come in; that it was only right they should have their innings; and that he had no doubt Mr. Disraeli would educate his party, and they would adopt Liberal measures. I believe that on this platform, a short time after that gentleman's speech was delivered, I ventured to differ from my right honourable friend; and I said that his opinion was based upon an entirely wrong apprehension of Mr. Disraeli's character. When Mr. Disraeli was in power previously, and gave Liberal measures, he was in a Government in a minority in the House of Commons, and, true to his character, without any reference to his political opinions, he was prepared, in order to keep possession of the Treasury Bench, to conciliate his opponents by giving measures to the country which they demanded from him. That was so marked a characteristic of Mr. Disraeli's conduct in regard to measures at that time that a most distinguished Conservative, a brother of the eminent Sir Robert Peel—General Jonathan Peel, the member for Huntingdonshire, and a most respectable type of the old form of Conservative opinion in the country—in a speech alluding to a discussion

that had taken place in the House of Commons some nights previously in regard to the purchase of some curiosities which it was proposed to place in the British Museum, said he thought the Treasury Bench ought to be removed and handed over to that institution, with the following inscription upon it : " This is the bench for the honour of sitting upon which all other honour, all consistency, and all statesmanship have been sacrificed." That was the judgment which a very respectable old Tory pronounced on the then Government. But circumstances are entirely altered. You have now got a Tory Government unadulterated, with a large majority at its back, and presided over by a man who is unequalled in his power of managing others. To the common people Lord Beaconsfield is a demagogue ; in the House of Commons and to the persons by whom he is surrounded, he uses all the powers of blandishment and of bribery—not of money exactly, in its gross form, but he dispenses the honours which fall to the right of the Crown to give in the way of patronage with a liberal hand ; and he scatters honours upon all his adherents. In fact he reaches from a very high point, and he possesses an abundant supply of titles, from those of an imperial character down to baronets. By the exercise of these means—by the judicious use of the patronage of the Crown, he exercised such an influence that I believe there has never, for a number of years, been a Prime Minister who enjoyed, on the one hand, a greater amount of the support and confidence of the Queen, and, on the other, a greater amount of obedience—I had almost said subserviency—on the part of his colleagues and the members of Parliament who sit on his side of the House of Commons. Now, my friend Mr. McMinnies has asked you and the Conservative working men a question, and I venture to repeat the question : are you satisfied with the present Government ? You have heard a great deal about them. I perfectly well recollect the year 1874, when the Liberal party suffered that reverse ; when the Liberal Government were turned out of power ; and I was one of the victims of that general election, and lost the great honour which I previously possessed of being the member for this borough ; that a great many other Liberals were swept away at the same time ; and why were they swept away ? I will tell you why. Mr. Gladstone had been charged by Mr. Disraeli with being guilty of carrying out harassing legislation ; but there was this remarkable circumstance about his harassing legislation—that he harassed the privileged few, gave to the country great benefits, and legislated in such a manner as to promote the prosperity of the millions of his fellow-countrymen. The privileged few—the officers in the army, gentlemen in the Church, members of the Civil Service, all of whom had felt the influence of this harassing legislation, through having certain privileges which they enjoyed withdrawn, felt embittered against Mr. Gladstone, and determined they would turn him out of office. In every part of the country, in every place where it was possible to bring their influence to bear, in order to turn out Mr. Gladstone, these men used their power to bring about this result, because the premier had attacked their privileges. It is certainly true that Mr. Gladstone had attacked the privileges of the few in order to do good to the great body of the people ; and I can tell you that these

privileged classes are not without great power. They control the press of this country to a great extent in London ; they are influential in the various clubs ; they form public opinion in London, and that opinion has, to a great extent, been so moulded as to be against Mr. Gladstone and the Liberal party. I know that my friend Mr. Hopwood will confirm what I am saying ; and I observe that Mr. Adam, the very able and excellent Liberal whip, says that public opinion in London is always behind the opinion in the provinces. It is always opposed to Liberalism ; why ? because we know that in London there are a great number of gentlemen who have an interest in just the policy which Lord Beaconsfield is supporting, and their interests are opposed to the general interests of the great body of the population. It was these men who to a very great extent struck the blow at Mr. Gladstone's Government in 1874. At that date the great body of the people who might, if they had wished, have supported that Government ; those who were enjoying untold blessings through the benign influence of the Administration and the reduction of the expenditure and the development of industry in various directions—for at that time it was the golden age of labour—were so well off that they did not care very much whether they made a change or not. The people at that time were so well off that they were not careful to support Mr. Gladstone to keep him in power ; and so I may say that the most illustrious Government which has occupied power in this country for a long period of time, fell by the stabs of those whose privileges it had touched, and utterly failed to receive the support of the multitude upon whom it had conferred benefits. My honourable friends have referred with very great ability to certain matters on which I should have spoken if they had not previously gone over the same ground ; but I think it is of the greatest importance that the question as regards expenditure and taxation, although the statements upon it may have been repeated again and again, should be brought continually before the minds and under the attention of the people of this country. Now there is one point, and only one point, with regard to the increased expenditure of the present Government to which I wish to make a reference, in the form of supplementing the remarks which have already been made by my friends who have preceded me. You have been told—and told quite correctly—that when the late Government went out of power they left behind them a surplus of 5½ millions, but I hear that a statement has appeared in the *Manchester Courier*—I understand it was that paper, but certainly it has been published in some Tory organ during the last few days—to the effect that there never was any surplus left by the late Government. The article in question said it was altogether a delusion to suppose that Mr. Gladstone left any surplus—in fact that there was any such thing as a surplus. Now, if by that the writer of the article means to say that the 5½ millions was not left in the form of gold in the Bank of England for disposal by the members of the Cabinet in whatever way they might think fit, the statement is quite correct. There is no doubt whatever that the amount produced by taxation in the year 1874 had been disposed of almost to its fullest extent upon the present Government taking office, because in that year Mr. Gladstone's administration out of the taxes or revenue of the

country had paid the Alabama claims, the cost of the Ashantee war, and certain other extraordinary charges. But the point is, and I shall try to put it before you, because this is a matter which I dare say you will see repeated again and again :—When the Chancellor of the Exchequer, for the time being, lays before Parliament his budget he always takes what would be the produce of the taxes if they continued to be taxes of the same character as in the previous twelve months, and he then shows what he estimates the expenditure for the twelve months ; and if there is any deficiency between the expenditure estimated and the estimated amount of the taxes he has to lay on new taxes ; but if there is a surplus, any evidence of an amount of money coming from the taxes over and above the expenditure, then he can take off taxes, and he proceeds to do so. I refer to the Chancellor of the Exchequer's speech, which he made at the beginning of 1874, when he was laying before Parliament his first budget, and I will just give you the amount which he stated to be the sum which would have been received from the taxes if he had allowed them to remain as in the previous year—the last year of the Gladstone Government—and how much surplus there would have been if the expenditure had remained the same. He said in his speech that if the taxes in the previous year were to be continued, he estimated the revenue at £77,995,000 ; and taking the expenditure to be the same as in the previous year—that is to say, that Mr. Gladstone had incurred in his ordinary expenditure—there would have been £72,503,000. The Chancellor of the Exchequer therefore said, “ I have a surplus of £5,492,000 to deal with.” So that you see it is altogether an attempt to deceive you when Tory papers try to persuade you that there was no surplus. Of course, as Sir Stafford Northcote at once proceeded to reduce the taxes with the surplus, the surplus really never existed, but it enabled him to reduce the taxation. Now what did he do with this surplus ? My honourable friend has alluded to what Sir Stafford Northcote did with the surplus which the Liberal Government left him to dispose of. He abolished the sugar duty, which was a very good thing, and thus disposed of about £2,000,000. He then relieved what are called local burdens of £2,000,000 of rates—that is to say he charged a large portion of the expenditure of lunatic asylums upon the taxes of the country, and since the date that that was done—in fact within the last year or two—they have thrown the cost of prisons upon the country, and so relieved local rates of about half a million. That is to say, the present Government have relieved local rates to the extent of about £2,500,000, which sum is now charged upon the general ratepayers. Now, that is a point upon which in passing I wish to make a few observations. A rate, as you know, is laid upon property. To a very great extent local rates are paid by land ; and when a tenant farmer goes to take a farm he no doubt calculates, or the land agent calculates, what are the outgoings upon the farm. There is so much for poor rate, so much for county charges, and so much for other charges ; and then in calculating the value of the farm or the rent which the farmer should pay for the land, the valuer takes into account how much there will be on account of outgoings ; and the landowner receives a smaller amount of rent in consequence of these rates being charged upon the land.

Supposing that the rates charged upon the farm amounted to £50 a year, it is quite clear that when that farm came to be re-valued for rent it would be re-valued at £50 more if that amount was taken off. I think that it is quite clear that to the extent that rates are charged upon land, rents are diminished, and that to the extent that rates are taken off land rents are increased. Now, the landowning Parliament support the Government, and impress upon them the necessity of taking off rates to the amount of large sums of money, and so relieve the rates upon property, and in the long run increase the rent of their own land. Where do they put it? Upon the taxes of the country. Who pays the taxes? I will tell you something about that. The customs and excise duties, which, as you know, include spirits, wine, tobacco, and articles of that kind, malt duty, and various other matters affecting the comfort of the people — these customs and excise duties which in the main are laid upon articles that are consumed by the people, including tea, produced last year no less a sum than £48,000,000 sterling, notwithstanding all the abolitions of taxes which had taken place in the form of the sugar duties and the abolition of the customs duties upon articles of food. Stamps and taxes which include all other sources of revenue, that is to say, in the form of burdens upon the country, amount to £22,000,000 a year; so that in point of fact the customs and excise duties make up two-thirds of the entire amount of the taxes charged upon the country. These two sums do not make up the whole revenue of the country. There is a large amount derived from the Post Office; there is a large revenue from the telegraphs; and, as you know, there are several other items which are not in the form of rates and taxes, and there are sums received in various ways in reduction of expenditure, which are not actual burdens upon the country; but in the shape of direct burdens upon the country you have two-thirds in the way of indirect taxation, which presses to a very great extent upon the industry of the people, upon working people who pay it; you have one-third in stamps and taxes which, to a great extent, no doubt, presses upon people with property, and who are in the possession of the general comforts of life. Now, you will observe that every million taken off land in the way of a reduction of local rates is not taken, as Mr. Cross said the other day at Southport, out of one pocket and put into the other, but it is taken to a large extent out of your pocket, and put into somebody else's pocket, and to a very great extent into the pockets of the owners of landed property. I tell you that it has been the policy of the Tory party in times past—and it will continue to be their policy unless the people of this country watch them—to charge more and more of the local rates upon the taxes of the country; and that policy I believe to be an indefensible policy, for it is relieving property of burdens which have been attached to it from time immemorial, and throwing those burdens upon the humblest of the population. Now, I tell you, out of £90,000,000 of the expenditure those representing the industry of the country will have to pay a very large proportion of the taxation of the country; in fact, we are paying a large proportion of it already. We have not at present laid taxes to the extent of £90,000,000 or £88,000,000, as the

Government say they have not spent the larger sum, but I believe they have, and they have only laid taxes to the extent of £83,000,000. They shirked the balance of expenditure, because they did not want to appear extravagant, and they said, "we will leave it to another year; something will no doubt turn up." Something has turned up, but it is in the wrong direction, and they will have to lay other taxes this year in order to meet the increased expenditure. Now, all this expenditure is most gratifying to some of the most important and influential classes in this country. The pressure put upon the Government by the spending services of the Crown is enormous. The army and navy are, of course, in favour of war. They all like this expenditure, so that there may be more places vacant, greater rapidity of promotion, and emoluments of an improved character. I do not know whether you ever heard of a public-house bearing the sign of "The Four Alls;" but in olden times it used to be a very fashionable sign. One of the "Four Alls" represented the King with his crown, then there was the priest with his cassock, the soldier in his uniform, and a farming-looking man in a smock-frock. And under this sign were the following inscriptions:—The King, "I rule all;" the priest, "I pray for all;" the soldier, "I fight for all;" and John Bull, "I pay for all." I find I have exhausted the time I expected to occupy; but there is one point, however, which I must ask you to give a little attention. I wish to point out to you in regard to the future that whilst we are looking to the past, we ought also, as wise and prudent men, to look forward to the probabilities of the future; and in looking forward to the probability of having an improvement in trade, I think we cannot fail to consider how far it is likely Lord Beaconsfield, with his party, will take a course calculated to promote the commerce of this country. I venture to say that Lord Beaconsfield entirely misapprehends and ignores the true source of England's prosperity and greatness. My reason for saying so is that at the Mansion House in November last, he made the following observations, to which I specially call your attention. It was in allusion to remarks made some time before by, I believe, Mr. Gladstone. He said, "We have been informed that our lot will be the lot of Genoa, Venice, and Holland. But there is a great difference between the condition of England and those picturesque and interesting communities. We have during ages of prosperity created a nation of 34,000,000, who are enjoying and have long enjoyed the two great blessings of civil life—justice and liberty. A nation of that character is more calculated to create empires than to give them up, and if the English people still possess the courage and the determination of their forefathers, their honour will never be tarnished and their power will never diminish." I venture to say that a Prime Minister who uses language like that entirely fails to perceive on what depends the greatness and prosperity of England. It is quite true that Genoa, Holland, and Venice, formerly places of importance, have passed away in their importance, and their trade and commerce have disappeared. But why? Because the competition of other countries had the effect of destroying the trade and commerce of those countries; and we may find if we are not careful that the competition of other countries may destroy

our trade and commerce ; but Lord Beaconsfield says, "But we are a population of 34,000,000 calculated to gain empires rather than to lose them ;" and if, as he says, we possess the character and determination of our forefathers, our honour will never be tarnished, and our power will never diminish. I don't know to what period of our history he refers. If he refers to that period when the Henrys and the Edwards were on the throne of England, carrying our glorious armies into France, our population was 3,000,000, and when our turbulent monarchs went into foreign wars that population remained at 3,000,000 for many generations. I am afraid to say how many, but I believe that for about 400 years ending with the reign of Henry VIII. the population remained stationary. Perhaps Mr. Disraeli alluded to those days of British glory when Marlborough was carrying on his wars on the Continent. The population of England and Wales, in those days was about 7,000,000, and during the next 100 years we had a good deal of turbulent foreign policy, we had a number of foreign wars, and that population only increased during the 100 years to the extent of 3,000,000. Since that time we have had a period, in the main, of peace. We have had a period during which our population has rapidly increased, because our employment and industry have increased, and our means of commerce have increased, and we have been able to secure the markets of the world by selling a good article at a low price. What does Lord Beaconsfield mean by saying that we are to sustain our prosperity by following the example of our forefathers? Does he mean that we are to carry our armies into foreign countries that we may take spoil from them, and live upon them? I can tell Lord Beaconsfield that that is not the way in which 33 millions of the British nation can exist. We must exist by getting employment ; we must exist by having a large foreign trade, and everything that tends to interrupt the trade and commerce of this country tends to injure the welfare of this country, and if it continues you will find that those 33 millions are not a source of strength, but of weakness. You may have poverty, you may have distress, you may have famine amongst that population of 33 millions if there is no foreign commerce. For what are they to live upon? We have to feed this 33,000,000. Will you feed them by honour and glory, by carrying your standard into foreign countries? You can only feed them by the arts of industry and of peace, and the Government and the Prime Minister who so entirely ignore the true genius of the British people, and the true elements of British commerce, is a danger to this country. And so long as Lord Beaconsfield is a Prime Minister, whose existence is a danger to the country, and so long as Lord Beaconsfield occupies office, you will always be in danger of having measures adopted which will tend to restrict the trade of the kingdom, depress the value of your industry, and probably in the future bring untold disasters upon you. Gentlemen, I for one will do everything in my power, as I hope you will, to turn out this Government ; and the resolution which I have to move (and one part of which I must express my regret that I have not drawn your attention to) is "That this meeting pledges itself to use every legitimate means to secure the election of John Gordon McMinnies, Esq., as the member for Warrington at the next parliamentary election." I

propose that resolution with the greatest cordiality and confidence, and I do hope that you will so attend to the interests of the Liberal party in this borough, that when the time of election arrives you may return him by a large majority.

No. VI.

Speech delivered in the House of Commons on the Order for going into Committee of Ways and Means, April 24, 1879.

Mr. Rylands, in rising to move the following resolutions :—

1.—That this House views with regret the great increase in the National Expenditure.

2.—That such Expenditure, for which Her Majesty's present Government are responsible, is not necessary, in the opinion of this House, to provide for the security of this country at home, or for the protection of its interests abroad.

3.—That the Taxes required to meet the present Expenditure impede the operations of agriculture and manufactures, and diminish the funds for the employment of labour in all branches of productive industry, thereby tending to produce pauperism and crime, and adding to the local and general burdens of the people.

4.—That this House is of opinion that immediate steps should be taken to reduce the present Expenditure to such an amount as may not only equalize the Revenue and Expenditure, but may give material relief to the British taxpayers.

said : We hear rather curious discussions as to what are the principles and the policy of the Conservative party under its present chief ; and I do not wonder that there is some difficulty in coming to a satisfactory conclusion on this knotty question, seeing the Protean character of the measures of the Government. But, sir, there is one matter which we can always predicate when a Conservative Government with Lord Beaconsfield at its head comes into power, and that is an increase in the National Expenditure. Lord Beaconsfield, in opposition, is one of the most economical of critics ; in power he is the most extravagant of ministers. During the latter years of Lord Palmerston's Government, Mr. Disraeli, in this House, constantly declaimed against the expenditure of Government. He denounced "bloated armaments," he charged the Government with "profligate expenditure." He said to Lord Palmerston that his "turbulent policy abroad" increased taxation and involved large expenditure, and in 1862 he warned the Government that—

"If they allowed their resources to be sapped, weakened, and exhausted, they would deprive themselves of the principal source of their power—a sound state of finance."

It would be well if Lord Beaconsfield would bring to bear on his own policy at the present moment the wise counsels he gave to Lord Palmerston's Government. But it was not very long after Lord Beaconsfield had made that statement that he was called upon to join Her Majesty's Government ; and in 1866 the Conservative Government, of which Mr. Disraeli was a prominent member, was formed. Now, sir, the moment that Cabinet was formed, we find that the economical professions of Mr. Disraeli were thrown to the wind. There was, in point of fact, a marvellous inconsistency between his promises and the

literal fulfilment of them. When the Government was formed, we observe at once that the Cabinet began making things pleasant all round. It was a good time for disposing of the patronage of the Crown; and in every Department—in the Army and Navy, and in the Civil Service—we had inflated estimates and supplementary votes. That Government came into power, as I have said, in 1866, with an expenditure, for the year ending March, of £66,000,000. The Government was in power for only a very short time. It went out of power in 1868, and yet, during that short period of its existence, it had increased the expenditure from £66,000,000 to £72,000,000. The Government also left arrears of £4,500,000 on account of the Abyssinian expedition and other services, to be paid by their successors. Well, exactly the same thing has happened with the present Government. They came into office in 1874, and they found an expenditure of £73,000,000, excluding the Alabama claims. Last year the expenditure was £85,000,000. But that was not the whole of the case. The House would recollect that in February last year the Government came down and proposed a vote of credit; and they obtained that vote, I would say, on grounds very much resembling false pretences. I will tell hon. gentlemen why—and I am within their recollection. The Government said, if we would grant them £6,000,000, it was only to be a sort of demonstration of moral influence to Europe, and they would not spend the money. Do not hon. gentleman recollect that the moment those £6,000,000 were voted the servants of the Crown rushed upon the expenditure of the grant with almost reckless extravagance? They laid violent hands upon those £6,000,000, and then performed a financial feat which is unparalleled. Within six weeks, in addition to the ordinary expenditure, they managed to spend £3,500,000. I want to point out that that £3,500,000 was spent for stores, and other charges, which properly came into account in the following year. Many of those stores, I am quite sure, were brought into stock, because this expenditure was going on at the very last day in March, 1878, and I have very good reason to believe that we paid out of the vote of credit for a number of things which were not supplied until after the 31st of March. I believe, also, that a portion of that £3,500,000 was paid into the Treasury chest, and that a certain portion was actually expended after March 31st, 1878; but whether that be so or not, I say we are entitled, in looking back at the expenditure of last year, to bring into it the £3,500,000 which practically belonged to the year 1878-9. But that is not all. During that year we carried on, for Imperial purposes, a war in India, and we have spent £2,000,000. The Government shrink from imposing the £2,000,000 on our taxpayers. If, in addition to ordinary expenditure, they had added the £2,000,000, there would have been an additional tax to impose, and the Government, therefore, had recourse to a financial juggle. The £2,000,000 is to be loaned to India without interest, and every hon. gentleman knows that, sooner or later, Great Britain will have to pay the £2,000,000. Just add up the total and you will find a Budget expenditure of £85,000,000; vote of credit, £3,500,000; loan to India, £2,000,000; giving a total expenditure for Imperial purposes by Her Majesty's Government in one year of

£91,000,000. Of course, this has not been exhibited to the country—this has been concealed. It has been concealed by means of exchequer bonds and other devices of impecuniosity. They have raised in revenue during the last twelve months no less a sum than £83,115,977, and I say that it is an amount so enormous that it is entirely unprecedented in the history of the country. There has been ample justification for the resolutions which I have the honour to propose. To show the way in which the national expenditure is going forward by leaps and bounds, I will just ask the attention of the House for a moment to a statement of the expenditure during the last sixty years. I am not going into the figures for each year. In the year 1819, when the expenditure was resuming its normal proportions after the great pressure of the Continental war, the gross expenditure of this country was £57,750,000; in 1850, £55,500,000; making a decrease in the thirty years ending 1850 of £2,250,000. What has happened since? Why, since 1850, upon the budget expenditure of last year, there has been an absolute increase of £30,000,000 in the expenditure of this country. That is to say, the gross expenditure has increased from £55,000,000 to £85,000,000. Now, sir, there are two statesmen who have been chiefly responsible for this enormous increase in expenditure during the last thirty years—one was Lord Palmerston and the other is Lord Beaconsfield. Mr. Cobden once said in this House that Lord Palmerston had cost the country £100,000,000, and he thought that Lord Palmerston was dear at the price; but Lord Beaconsfield is determined not to be inferior to any other statesman in any walk of life, and Lord Beaconsfield has, indeed, distanced every competitor in the race of extravagant expenditure. It is not surprising. Lord Beaconsfield came to take charge of the national finance with an axiom which he announced to his admiring friends at Aylesbury some years ago, when he said that—“If it is earned by an industrious and free people, the national debt is a mere fleabite.” If he regards the national debt as a mere fleabite, one can easily imagine his indifference to reducing it or keeping down the expenditure. Now, I charge upon Lord Beaconsfield that he has not only heaped up from year to year additional millions of expenditure upon this country, but that he is, in fact, exposing us to future liabilities, which it is utterly impossible for anybody to realise. In fact, he is going in a spirit of reckless adventure all over the world, and a costly adventure it is. There is a class of people in this country—perhaps they are represented on the other side of this House—who seem to like being taxed, and they join in a “people’s tribute” to the premier, and they are going to present him with a gold wreath. The active promoter of this scheme is a gentleman with a curious name—Mr. Tracy Turnerelli—and he has placed himself upon a pinnacle of fame by initiating this grand scheme, and he no doubt derives great assistance from the eloquence of a clergyman in Manchester, who, a few weeks ago, preached a sermon of an admirable description. I shall not trouble the House with the whole of the sermon, but only a few passages, and must give out the text. The Rev. Richard Butler, preaching at St. Silas’s Church, spoke from the text—“What shall be done unto the man whom the King delighteth to honour?” And upon that text he drew an elaborate parallel between

Mordecai, Joseph, the ruler of Egypt, and Lord Beaconsfield, whom he considered three of the greatest statesmen in the world's history. He asked,—

“What had been done in England for the man who, by God's grace, had risen from a gentleman of the press to be a peer in England, and almost the King of England?”

There were a number of other very pretty recognitions of Lord Beaconsfield's great services. I will not trouble the House with the whole of the sermon. He concluded it by saying that—

“He hoped that in addition to the honour Lord Beaconsfield had received, a splendid gold wreath might be got up for Benjamin Disraeli by the millions of England, each giving a penny for this wreath of gold to adorn the head of Benjamin Disraeli, in whose career there was not one dishonourable blot.”

But out of the 34,000,000 people of England, 52,800 only have been found, each of them to give a penny towards this tribute to the Premier. I suppose those people are the rump of the jingo party; and I hope that they will take the tribute in procession to Downing Street, and thus achieve the dignity of a Tichborne demonstration. But, sir, this is not the only tribute which is now being paid by the industrious millions of this country to the Premier. Every struggling tradesman and farmer sees his income diminishing and his anxieties increasing in consequence of the burdens which have been laid upon him. Every distressed operative not only has to sacrifice the comforts, but the necessities of life; and even the poor wretched pauper, who goes into a grocer's shop and buys half-an-ounce of tobacco, contributes his tribute in recognition of the great policy of the Premier of England. I ask the House to consider whether the present condition of England does not furnish very important justification for the resolutions which I have ventured to submit to their notice. I have no doubt that in former periods there have been occasionally narrow districts in England where trade has been more seriously depressed, and where the sufferings of the people have been greater than at present; but I think I shall be borne out by the House, when I say that in no former period of our history has there been such a general and such a universal depression of trade, and so much commercial suffering in all branches of industry, as there is at the present moment. I do not know whether hon. gentlemen take the trouble to read the trade reports in *The Times*, but if they look over the trade reports of last Monday, they will find a notice of the state of trade in all the principal centres of industry. They will find that in Birmingham orders are slack and stocks heavy; Sheffield, trade unsatisfactory; Manchester, cloth slow of sale; Nottingham, prices unremunerative; Bradford, trade dull and without improvement; Dundee, limited business; Huddersfield, trade very dull; Leeds, unremunerative rates; and Middlesbrough, trade depressed. I have taken all of the most important places of industry in England. Hon. gentlemen seem to think that these accounts mean very little; but we, who are connected with these industries, know they mean very much. We know they mean that millions of capital at the present moment are being employed in this country without remunera-

tion, and, in many cases, with absolute loss. We know that these reports mean that amongst the working classes of the country there is a less demand for employment, there are reduced wages, there is an absolute loss of work, and we know that the effect of all that is to add to the demand upon the relief granted by the guardians of the poor. Well, sir, it appears to me that there is another point in the present state of the country which is worthy of great consideration—that is, the interest represented so fully in this House—I mean the agricultural interest. It so happens, perhaps to a greater extent than we have ever experienced in this country, that trade and agriculture are at the present moment companions in distress; that agriculturists are suffering in a manner that they have never done before. There has been a succession of four bad harvests. While I hope, and, no doubt, we may believe, that that source of difficulty with the agriculturists may be removed under happier circumstances, yet, we must bear in mind that there are other causes at work, the effect of which must necessarily continue to press very severely upon the agricultural interest. I noticed a speech, delivered the other day in Suffolk, by the hon. gentleman the member for South Norfolk, in which the hon. gentleman alleged that one of the great difficulties under which agriculturists were labouring arose in consequence of the cheapness of food, brought about by increased importation of cattle and corn from other countries. My hon. friend alluded, in his speech, to California, whence he said there were large importations of corn at a cost in freight of only 1s. per bushel; and he said that the farmers in California had a great advantage over the farmers in England, because they had a virgin soil, light taxes, and low rent. He also mentioned that from India, in 1873, we received 11,000 tons of wheat, but that in 1877 we received 256,000 tons. I saw in the paper a short time ago that Mr. Lawes, one of the highest authorities on agriculture, stated that in the United States more than 1,000,000 acres of wheat had been brought under cultivation every year for some years past; and he notices the fact that the agriculturists working the land are lightly taxed. I think it must be observed that there is a great depression coming upon the agricultural interest on account of the great importation of all kinds of agricultural produce. I know perfectly well what will be the result of all this suffering and national distress in all branches of industry. We shall find hon. gentlemen coming to the Government and to the House with what Lord Derby so well called, at Rochdale, “quackish remedies for our present difficulties.” What are the real remedies for this state of things? Now, I think I shall be borne out, when I say that one of the most important remedies of the present difficulties in which we are placed is that we should be able to have a cheap production if we are to stand against foreign competition. In regard to agriculture, as well as manufacture, we must endeavour to secure cheapness. We have to compete with the world; but we cannot do that satisfactorily with dear articles in manufacture. So, in the same way, if the agriculturists of England are to compete and stand successfully this importation of food from other countries, they must be in a position to dispose of their produce cheaply. Well, now, sir, I think no hon. gentleman can deny that it is a very

important element in the cheapness of production that the burden of taxation should be reduced. When taxation was very much less than at the present moment, I remember that Mr. Cobden pointed out that heavy taxation, even then, was a most serious hindrance to the prosperity of the country. Could Mr. Cobden have lived until to-day, and have seen the enormous taxation of the Government now pressing on the country, I am quite sure he would have told us we were running a risk of permanently and seriously interfering with the manufacturing and commercial interests of the country. But it is not only as to expenditure, in which Government could render great assistance to trade and agriculture—they could not only do this by cutting down expenditure and relieving taxation; but what we want for the security and promotion of commerce is peace in our time. My hon. and learned friend the member for Oxford, in one of his eloquent and powerful speeches—for which the country is greatly indebted—only a short time ago spoke about our living in the midst of war and in the atmosphere of war. Sir, when war flourishes trade decays; it is utterly impossible for us to carry on the industry and commercial arrangements of this country if we are to be in a state of apprehension, if we do not know from one day to another where another thunder-cloud may not burst. It is very essential, for the success of commerce, that there should be confidence, not only in the present, but in the future. But we can have no confidence in the future so long as the Imperial policy of the present Government exists. And when they are approached by people who want some relief from this present distress, I venture to tell them that there are only two ways in which they could at once assist the trade of the country and agriculture also. One alternative is to cut down their expenditure several millions, and entirely change their policy; the other is for them to resign their seats. I am not now speaking simply as a joke; but I firmly believe that any change of policy, or change of Government, would at once be felt by the great industrial interests of the country as a positive relief, and it would give confidence in future transactions. If hon. gentlemen opposite doubt it, they had better take the opinion of the country upon it forthwith. Now there is another urgent necessity for the Resolutions which I now submit to the House, and it is the extraordinary manner in which the right hon. gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer has presented to the House and has conducted the financial arrangements of the country. The mode in which the financial arrangements have been laid before the House has necessarily confused the minds of hon. members, and has prevented the people appreciating, to the full extent, what the proposals of the Government were. There was in the days of Queen Anne, an expression used by Dean Swift, which would not be inapplicable in this matter. I may say that in respect to the financial arrangements of the year, the House and the country have been “bubbled,”—have been kept from ascertaining, as they ought to ascertain, what is the actual expenditure which is proposed, and, in fact, they have been prevented from grasping the financial affairs of the country. I do not, however, intend to dwell on this part of the case. I do not intend to dwell upon the way the expenditure has been met by

the issue of Exchequer bonds—nor do I intend to dwell upon the first Budget, the second, or the third Budget ; nor upon the fact that every anticipation experienced in the first Budget speech, except as to what was raised from taxation, has proved to be a delusion. One justification for the Resolution which I am now bringing before the House is that we shall have valuable contributions to the Debate, which will enlighten the country with regard to the present financial policy of the Government. I hope the right hon. gentleman the member for Greenwich—the highest financial authority in the kingdom—will give us the benefit of his opinion ; and I am sure we are all glad to see the right hon. gentlemen the member for Pontefract in his place, believing that he too may address us upon this important subject. Well, now, when we look back at the manner in which the financial affairs of the last year have been conducted we are asked to go over exactly the same ground again ; and I must say it will be scarcely respectful to the House for the Chancellor of the Exchequer to ask us this year to pass through the same humiliating course that we passed through during the last financial year. The Chancellor of the Exchequer has laid before the House his budget estimate, and he fixed the expenditure at £81,153,573. Now, sir, does the Chancellor of the Exchequer for a moment believe that this estimate will not be exceeded ? I cannot for a moment suppose that the Chancellor of the Exchequer imagines that his estimate will not be exceeded. Does any member of the Government, either in or out of the Cabinet—unless it may be the right hon. gentleman the Judge Advocate General, who, judging from his speech at Cockermouth, does not hesitate to say almost anything—now venture to make such an assertion ? I fully sympathise with the Chancellor of the Exchequer, for I am quite aware that all this financial confusion must be excessively distasteful to him. I am quite sure he feels very strongly these difficulties, which are not of his own creating. But how is it that he is unable to place before us in the budget speech of the year a correct and reliable estimate of the amount of the expenditure ? In ordinary Cabinets there is no difficulty at all in affording this information. I presume that when an ordinary Cabinet meets at the beginning of a financial year, they are enabled to calculate, with pretty fair certainty, what will be the expenditure that the policy they have decided to adopt will be likely to require. But the Cabinet we have at present presents a most extraordinary spectacle. On many occasions we have seen evidences that there is a mind of wonderful power of tenacity—a mind filled with schemes of an Imperial and Oriental policy—which controls the minds of his weaker colleagues in the Cabinet, and, practically, develops a policy which is made known to the Government when they are absolutely committed to it, and afterwards disclosed to the world. Why, sir, it seems as though we were witnessing—when we look at the proceedings of her Majesty's Government—it seems as if we were witnessing some great process of evolution proceeding from, and connected with, an inscrutable purpose. The Government have been positively dragged, in spite of themselves, on these lines of turbulent aggression, which cannot be followed without seriously embarrassing the Chancellor of the Exchequer in his financial arrangements. Hon.

gentlemen, perhaps, think I have made this statement without any sufficient consideration. I would ask them just to look for a moment at some of these evidences, which will enable them to see that the policy of the Cabinet is one in which they have been controlled. Take, for instance, the period before the breaking out of the Russo-Turkish war. There is no doubt whatever that this House and the country felt with Lord Derby when he said that the greatest of British interests was peace; and I believe that the majority of the Cabinet had no bitter hatred against Russia—that they had no desire the occasion should occur to even humiliate Russia—and I do not think that they had the care for Turkey which would induce them to endeavour to bolster up an infamous Power. Lord Salisbury was sent to the Constantinople Conference, and it was understood he would make it appear that Turkey must yield to the decisions of the Conference. I believe Turkey would have yielded—we are entitled to say she would have yielded. But at the very moment that Lord Salisbury was trying to bring to bear this pressure upon the Porte—at that very moment—there was another agent of the British Government at work, who was backing up the Sultan of Turkey to resist the determination of the Conference. Sir Henry Elliot, who was supported by the great power at home, defeated Lord Salisbury's mission, and the noble lord returned unsuccessful from what had every appearance of a fool's errand. Now, sir, I will give the hon. gentlemen another instance of this remarkable process of evolution. Take Afghanistan. In this House, in 1877, the right hon. gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer rose in his place, and stated his own opinions and those of the Government in a most explicit manner on this subject. He laid down two lines of policy—one of prudence, keeping within our own frontier, developing our own resources and keeping down our own expenditure; and the other a dangerous policy, crossing the frontier, and getting all our affairs into a difficult and dangerous position. He said in this House that he was in favour of the prudent policy; and in the other House I feel sure similar assurances were given. What, however, was the effect? At the very moment the right hon. gentleman was stating his views conscientiously in this House, there was one representative of this power behind the Government in India—Lord Lytton—who was carrying on a great scheme of policy, advancing on the forward line. One quarrel after another was picked until, at length, the time of action arrived, and then we heard of a pretended insult from the Ameer—we heard something of Russian intrigue—and then we had an ultimatum setting forth in the clearest terms all the charges that could possibly be brought against the ruler of Afghanistan. At length, however, the real motive leaked out—the enigma of the Sphinx was solved—for at a Mansion House dinner the Premier, putting aside altogether as unworthy of notice all these pretended reasons for this Indian policy, announced the true reason of the Government policy—a scientific rectification of the frontier; in other words, an absolutely unjust and criminal invasion of another's territory in order to obtain property which does not belong to us. I will give you another instance. We have heard that Her Majesty's Government have not the slightest intention of annexing any

country, or of interfering in any way with the rights of surrounding tribes, but what has been done in South Africa? Sir Bartle Frere was not sent out there without instructions, and when he got into the country he very soon began to show his hand when he set to work upon the planned lines of Imperial policy; and you have it announced, in his earlier despatches, that he believed it was necessary the Queen's dominions should be largely extended in South Africa. He also told the Government in despatches of wonderful eloquence and ingenious pleading that so long as Cetewayo's power existed there would be no peace or protection to the British colony. What then happened? It was alleged, as in the case of the Ameer of Afghanistan, that Cetewayo had insulted us; that he was a menace to British interests; and we sent a long ultimatum to him and commenced hostilities against him. The Secretary of State for the Colonies evidently had no intention of adopting this course of policy. I doubt whether he had any idea of it; and he began by feeble remonstrances in his despatches to check this arrogant pro-consul; but the pro-consul gave his official superior a snub. Sir Bartle Frere treated the right hon. gentleman with the cool assumption of a man conscious of superior information and judgment, and prosecuting lofty plans, when questioned or criticised by ignorant incapacity. The misfortune is that every measure of this Imperial policy leads to further complications, further wars, and further expenditure of blood and treasure. The Government are on an inclined plane—they cannot take one of these steps without going still further downwards. "*Facilis descensus Avernii*." Well, now, sir, I should like to ask how it is possible, under these circumstances, for the Chancellor of the Exchequer to form any correct idea of the expenditure of the coming year, or to lay on the table any reliable estimate? I wish we could have a large map hung up of three-quarters of the globe; and if we could mark with a dark spot every place in which British armies are engaged, and if we could mark that wider range where the consequences of the policy of the Government have planted seeds of future difficulties and disturbances, we should find that the dark shadow of fatal British Imperial policy covers hundreds of thousands of square miles of country inhabited by many millions of people. The fact is, sir, that if we look round on the position of the relations of this country, we find that nothing is settled anywhere. I am afraid to quote the words used in reference to the Berlin Treaty—their repetition, "Peace with honour," has made them a little nauseating, but with regard to the Berlin Treaty itself I suppose there is nobody who really supposes it to be a settlement of the question. Does anybody think that by means of this Treaty we can hand back 27,510 square miles of country and 1,500,000 of its inhabitants in Bulgaria to what has been called "the uncovenanted mercies" of the Turk? Can we keep these Bulgarians severed in this unnatural way from the fellow-men of their nation? It is utterly impossible to think such an arrangement can be made permanent. Then there is Greece. I shall not travel over that subject, which was discussed here the other night with so much ability; but we cannot but believe that there the elements are left which will lead to serious results. Then we have the annexation of the Transvaal, of which at the close of

the session of 1877, it was said, in the Queen's speech, that the proclamation of Her Majesty's Sovereignty "had been received throughout the province with enthusiasm," yet there we find the elements of difficulty and disaffection. Then there is the Zulu War, and whatever may be the results, there must be enormous expenditure, and assuredly there are most painful emotions throughout the country in watching the occurrences of the war by the belief that the war is both unjust and unnecessary. Then, just before we separated for Easter, there was anxiety that we should have to advance upon Cabul. The Chancellor of the Exchequer tried to satisfy us, and Lord Lytton telegraphed that there would be no advance upon Cabul without a reference to home. But he used some rather ominous words. He said, in order to give the negotiations a reasonable chance of success, the troops must be ready for all contingencies. Well, my impression is, that the next thing we shall hear is that there has been an advance upon Cabul. History repeats itself, and one of the blackest pages in English History is in danger of being repeated. If hon. gentlemen doubt, let them read Sir Archibald Alison's account of the retreat from Cabul 40 years ago, and they must admit it is indeed a black page in our history. Then we turn to Burmah. This is closely associated with the question. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, in one of his soothing—I might almost say soporific—assurances, led us to believe that it was the intention of the Government that no action should be taken in Burmah; but these assurances amount to nothing, unless we know that the annexation of Burmah forms no part of the Imperial policy of which we are now witnessing the gradual evolution. If it is the intention that Burmah shall be annexed, then we shall have the Afghan story repeated—there will be insults offered to our Resident, and a violation of our frontier; a frontier also which, I believe, is very unscientific. I see by the *Times* of Monday, that it is asserted that King Thebau is determined not to hear or speak of proposals from the Indian Government; and to make the story complete, the correspondent of the *Times* says that two Russian officers are expected at Mandalay. If all this leads to the necessity, on the part of Lord Lytton, of taking possession of the Throne of his golden-footed Majesty the King of the White Elephants, then the annexation will take place. If that event is brought about, considering the character of the territories which the Government are annexing to the British Dominions, the Queen should have an addition to her title of Empress of India of the Queen of all the White Elephants. The catalogue of difficulties is not yet complete; but time will fail me if I attempt to mention them all. You have Cyprus, which Lord Beaconsfield says is not to be a burden to the country. Does anybody believe that? Everyone knows that there will certainly be a large expenditure this year, on that account, added to the Estimates Parliament will have to provide. Is the protection of Asia Minor a sham or a reality? If a sham, let us know it; if a reality, then we may at any moment be called upon for an expenditure to maintain engagements of an utterly impossible character. In Egypt the meddling and muddling has been going on for years; and we cannot tell that at any moment we may not be called upon for expenditure there from the British Treasury. Looking round a

all these facts and circumstances, foreigners must regard us with amazement as suffering from a national craze, combined of a nightmare hatred of Russia, and an insane lust of dominion. How are we to put a stop to this? We cannot refuse to vote supplies. I believe there are a great many people in the country who are strongly of opinion that we ought not to pay the cost of the army and navy to be used to deprive the inhabitants of a country of their possessions; but if we send forth our army on an expedition—inglorious and unjust though it may be—we must provide the necessary supplies. We cannot refuse the supplies, however much we deplore that the lives of our gallant soldiers should be exposed in such a war. But, at all events, we can do this—we can mark with our reprobation the policy which leads to the necessity of voting these supplies; and this we can do by joining in the resolution I have the honour to propose, condemning a Government who are sacrificing the best interests of the country—who are imposing intolerable burdens of taxation on the people—and who are disturbing the peace of the world by a policy of aggression and menace. I beg, sir, to move the first of the resolutions which I have placed on the paper—namely:—"That this House views with regret the great increase in the National expenditure."

No. VII.

Speech delivered at a Great Liberal Demonstration at Burnley, in favour of the Extension of the Franchise Bill, Aug. 23, 1884.

It is not possible for me to see all your earnest faces without being reminded of the last election for Burnley, and you recollect that in 1880 we carried the borough by a larger majority in favour of the Liberal party than on any previous occasion. On the same occasion we turned two Tories out of North-East Lancashire, and returned a most distinguished Liberal in the person of Lord Hartington. Stalybridge returned my friend Mr. Summers in the place of a Tory, Ashton returned Mr. Hugh Mason, and the other boroughs returned a majority of Liberals. That went on all through the kingdom, and we carried a large majority of the seats in Parliament, the large majority being good sound Liberals who went there to carry further measures of reform. And now, as Mr. Summers tells you, Lord Salisbury says that this House of Commons with a majority of 130 in favour of the Reform Bill does not represent the people. I should like to know who they do represent if they do not represent the people. He also says, as Mr. Summers has told you, that there has been no public interest and no petitions. Let me tell you a piece of history. Before the great Reform Act of 1832—in 1829 and 1830 there were not a score of petitions presented to Parliament in favour of Reform, and the Tories said there was no feeling in favour of Reform. But there was an element of smouldering discontent and dissatisfaction, there was smouldering excitement, and it only was necessary for a disturbance to take place on the Continent when the entire people of England rose as one man and demanded that

they should have their rights, and that the borough-mongering and rotten borough-system should be done away with. Lord Salisbury, I suppose, wants to keep up this system in the same way now. He says there is no popular feeling, and that we are trying to legislate by pic-nics. These large meetings are pic-nics, and they are trying to get up opposition pic-nics. I will tell you what they do. You must know that on the Tory side are most of the great lords and owners of magnificent parks and beautiful places, and these noble lords are opening their parks to the people in order that they may have pic-nics in favour of the House of Lords. I will just give you an example of one of these pic-nics in favour of the Tories. It took place at the Park of the Earl of Stanhope, which is evidently a beautiful place. The Tories in the neighbourhood were asked to come to this Saturday afternoon fête, the advertisement announcing the same said "The beautiful grounds will be thrown open. Cricket, lawn tennis, and other games are arranged for. A band will be in attendance. Refreshments will be supplied at a fixed tariff"—and I should like to know what the "fixed tariff" was. Then having put out this advertisement the following words are placed under it:—"Lord Stanhope will also deliver a speech." The people of the neighbourhood, perhaps a thousand or two of them get together, they hear the band play, walk in these beautiful grounds, have cricket and lawn tennis, and refreshments at a fixed tariff, and then, having got themselves into a very good and pleasant frame of mind, my Lord Stanhope gets up and makes a speech in favour of the Constitution, the Queen, the Lords, and the Church, and tells them that if they oppose one they oppose the other. I think there is no difficulty in seeing the difference between the demonstrations that we are having in favour of this measure of reform, and the sort of pic-nic meetings that the noble lords are getting up in their own parks. The Tories, moreover, say that although they are having these pic-nics against Mr. Gladstone's Reform Bill, it is not that they are not reformers. They say they are good reformers. It has occurred to me that if the licensed victuallers and beersellers of a district were to form themselves into an association and call themselves the sons of temperance it would be about as reasonable as for the Conservatives to call themselves reformers. When people say they are reformers we ought to ask something about their character, and this reminds me of an anecdote which I have heard. There was a miller who wanted a carter, and so he put out an advertisement. A man went to apply for the situation, and the miller, after hearing what he had to say, said, "Well, my man, have you brought your character with you?" "Character!" replied the man, "No; I am better beaut one." Now the Tories are far better without any looking into their character. I noticed in the paper that last Saturday was the anniversary of a great meeting, a much larger meeting than this, at which there were, I suppose, some 100,000 people claiming reform. And what happened? The Tories showed their interest in reform in those days by sending soldiers and Cheshire yeomanry to cut down the people in hundreds at Peterloo. Again, what happened in the time of the great Reform Act of 1832? Why, in those days there were 89 peers who returned 175 members to the House of Commons for rotten

boroughs, and there were 66 other landowners returning 100 members for similar boroughs. That, I say, was a horrible state of things ; but did the Tories seek to reform it ? Nothing of the kind. The Tories said it was the best constitution the world had ever seen, and that the House of Commons well represented the country, although there were so many of these men returned by rotten boroughs. There was one borough—Newark—which was owned by the Duke of Newcastle, and there he was, through his influence, able to return whom he pleased. The Duke returned a man for the borough ; but the people of Newark said : “ This is not the man we want to have as our member ; you have no right to return him,” and there was a complaint made in the House of Lords against the conduct of the Duke. And what did the latter say ? He said : “ My Lords, has not a man the right to do what he likes with his own ? ” That was the Tory idea, that they should do what they liked with the representation of the people, and they resisted as far as they could resist any reform of the abuses that then existed. The other day Sir Stafford Northcote referred to Lord Beaconsfield’s Reform Act of 1867 at a pic-nic at Hughenden Park, where Lord Beaconsfield lived, and in the course of his speech seemed to imagine that the spirit of the deceased statesman was looking down upon him. He said : “ If the great spirit of Lord Beaconsfield could know that we Conservatives were opposing a just measure of reform he would have been greatly astonished, because Lord Beaconsfield in that measure of 1867-8 passed an Act far more Liberal than any Act previously passed, and gave to the people a great and broad extension of the household qualification.” The Tories claim that for Lord Beaconsfield ; but let us inquire into their character in regard to that transaction. Let me remind you that as the household franchise was first proposed by Lord Beaconsfield it was to be connected with a two years’ residence, and it also required that a man should pay all his own rates, so that all cottagers whose rates were compounded for would have to be disqualified, and every man who had not lived in a place two years would have to have no vote. In addition to that, he had a number of fancy franchises : all graduates of Universities, all clergymen, all schoolmasters, all depositors of £50, everybody who paid £1 a year in direct taxes were to have votes ; and not only so, these men who had a vote because they paid taxes or had a deposit were to have a dual vote in addition to the vote they had as householders. It was altogether a mockery, a delusion, and a snare. John Bright denounced it in the House of Commons, and made use of the words which were inscribed on a banner at one of their processions in Birmingham, and which was also inscribed on a banner the other day in London :—“ Deal with us on the square ; we have been chiselled too long.” Mr. Bright and Mr. Gladstone denounced this professed Reform Bill as a mockery, a delusion, and a snare, and they, being supported by the Liberal party in the House of Commons, were able to strike out all these fancy franchises, were able to give household suffrage, and were able to secure that there should only be twelve months’ residence. And that is the Reform Act of Mr. Disraeli ; it was not Mr. Disraeli’s Act of Parliament, but which he accepted because he was compelled to do so by Mr. Gladstone, Mr. Bright, and

the other leaders of the Liberal party. I will not dwell upon the other question about the excuse made by Lord Salisbury that this Bill ought to be accompanied by a redistribution of seats. We are very much in favour of a redistribution of seats ourselves. We do not want small boroughs to continue to have a representation much larger than large constituencies ; we want a fair redistribution, but we say we must, in the first instance, secure that this great addition to the franchise shall be given, and that these two millions of capable citizens shall enjoy the privilege of a vote. I see that the Tories have put on the walls of Burnley and elsewhere an extract from Mr. Bright's speech, in which he said, "Repudiate without mercy any Bill that any Government whatever may introduce, whatever its seeming concessions may be, if it does not redistribute the seats obtained from the extinction of small boroughs amongst the large towns." And the Tories are putting that up as an excuse for what they are doing now. At the time Mr. Bright made use of those words Mr. Disraeli and the Tories were in office. Mr. Bright had seen how tricky the Government were, and he knew perfectly well that unless the Liberal party insisted on redistribution they would very likely be chiselled. Mr. Disraeli, in his professed redistribution of seats, proposed a very small homœopathic dose indeed. I find on reference that he proposed to partially disfranchise 23 towns under 7,000 inhabitants. He did not totally disfranchise them, but those towns having two members he proposed to take one member from them and give them to other large towns. The Liberal party improved that very much, by disfranchising a larger number of small places and giving more members to the larger constituencies. To look at the state of things now, we know perfectly well that Mr. Gladstone is most anxious to secure a very great measure of redistribution, but Mr. Bright knows, and I know, that if the Franchise Bill was coupled with a Redistribution Bill there would be a very great chance indeed of both being thrown out of the House of Commons. On our side of the House of Commons there are a good many Liberal members sitting for very small constituencies, and I can quite understand that these small boroughs may not be very anxious to have their seats taken away from them, and it is just possible that they may press upon their members to adopt some means or other with a view of saving their existence. In any case a Redistribution Bill would be a Bill that would take a great amount of time ; it would open up a great many difficulties, and it certainly would give a change of a combination which might defeat the Government and the Bill. But what Mr. Gladstone says is this : "I am altogether with you for a fair and full redistribution, but if these two million new votes have their rights then I know that I shall be able, backed by this enfranchisement bill, to carry a Redistribution Bill through the House of Commons, and, therefore, I will not bring in a Redistribution Bill until the Franchise Bill is safe." And I think, gentlemen, he is perfectly right, and Mr. Bright thinks he is right. He thinks the circumstances are such at the present time that it is absolutely necessary that we should deal with the franchise first, and then with redistribution afterwards. What is the worst that could happen ? Supposing we had a dissolution upon the new suffrage, it would only be for a

time, and you would have two millions more men having something to say on the subject, even if the Redistribution Bill had not been carried. I have no doubt at all, in my own mind, that if we get the Franchise Bill, redistribution will follow next year, and we shall have accomplished the greatest reform that any of you have witnessed in your lifetime. But the House of Lords say "No; we want to compel the Government to dissolve," and I say that Mr. Gladstone is justified by the feeling of the country in saying to the House of Lords that he will not dissolve at their dictation. I hope Mr. Gladstone will insist upon the Lords accepting this Franchise Bill, and I trust that if the necessity arises, Mr. Gladstone will not hesitate in asking for the authority of the Queen to appoint a sufficient number of Liberal Peers to carry the measure through the House of Lords. I believe that it will come to that, and that Mr. Gladstone will have to force the Lords to accept this bill by a threat of that kind. But suppose they do yield and swallow the bill, I hope we shall not forget that this House of Lords is a constant source of obstruction and mischief. I do not know what right they have to be where they are. I have seen lately that some noble Lord said the House of Lords was the oldest institution in the country. I will tell you why. There was a time when the barons of this land held the whole of the country in their power. They held it under the king, and as possessors of the land they had everything upon it. They robbed the industrious community of their earnings, and treated the labouring classes as mere villains and serfs, and then, having this great power in the country, no doubt they insisted that they should be consulted by the king, and the House of Peers or House of Lords sprang into existence, because they arrogated to themselves the whole power of the country. But that is many hundred years ago. At the time I speak of there was an opportunity—which the barons of the soil did not hesitate to take advantage of—of plundering the rest of the community for their own benefit, and, in fact, getting them under the absolute control of those great feudal owners of the soil. But by degrees the middle class arose up against them, industry and trade took root in this country, the working classes became intelligent and asserted their rights, and now fortunately we are in a position to contest with their Lordships the rights which they derived from feudal times. They derived these rights by hereditary assumption, and it has been truly said that a man votes upon everything which is closely connected with all your interests and happiness, simply because he is the son of his father, or at all events of his mother. And I observe that a noble duke has claimed something very much higher than the fact that the House of Lords is the oldest institution in the kingdom. The Duke of Portland said there was a cry at a public meeting "down with the Lords"; but he asked why. "If," said the duke, "God has placed the members of the House of Lords in that state of life, why should men pull them down?" Why, this is the old divine right. You have heard of the divine right of kings; you remember that Charles Stuart insisted upon his divine right to tax the people without their consent. The divine right did not answer the purpose of that king, and I dare say that in the nineteenth century the divine right won't answer the purpose of the Lords. My friend Mr.

Summers has mentioned a speech of Lord Carnarvon, in which he gave an illustration about a meddlesome lad who meddled with everything until he happened to meddle with a bee-hive, which the noble lord said was an illustration of what was going on with the House of Lords at the present time. I could not help thinking when I read Lord Carnarvon's speech that the illustration was a good one. There is a great hive of bees in this country—a hive of industrious bees, millions of bees all over the country forming the great population of this national hive—and there has been a meddlesome party. There has been a party which has meddled continually with the interests of this country, and now this meddlesome party, represented by this meddling and muddling boy, has struck at this hive of bees by refusing their rights to the industrial population of the country. It is not the House of Lords that is the hive of bees—the people are the great hive of bees, and it is the 500 men comprising the House of Lords who have been meddling with the bees. Now the latter are coming out of their hives and saying what they intend to do, and my impression is that the Lords will find that they have meddled with the hive of bees without any advantage to themselves. I notice Mr. Plunkett, the other day, referred to the fact that in the House of Lords there were a great many peers of great ability, of great statesmanship, and altogether of the highest possible character. That may be true about a hundred of them; but what about the others? What about the Lords that when they came to vote the other night, the door-keepers did not even know them—men who take no interest in public affairs and are only brought up when called upon to do mischief of this kind? I believe the House of Lords by the course they are taking will at all events do this good—they will force upon the mass of the people the consideration as to how far it is desirable that a chamber of hereditary legislators should continue to exist. The Lords, for the last 50 or 60 years, have always been putting themselves in opposition to popular progress. They have rejected many popular measures sent up to them; they have spoiled many measures sent up to them by what they call their amendments, and they have delayed measures for years for which the country was anxious, and which were necessary for the good of the country. I believe that that cannot continue. I cannot imagine that a population of intelligent Englishmen who take an interest in political affairs, I cannot suppose for a moment that men who join together to make sacrifices in order that they may be well represented in the people's House of Parliament, I cannot imagine that men of that character and of those motives, will allow a House to exist which is there by no right whatever except the right of prescription and privilege; but that the people of England will insist that they shall be brought into accord with the great principles which now regulate the Government of England. They talk about the Queen and the Constitution, I have no hesitation in saying that if the policy of the Lords in former years had been adopted, if they had not been controlled, if by their obstinacy they had prevented the Reform Act of 1832, if by their obstinacy they had continued to plunder the people by a tax upon their food—then I say that so far from supporting the Queen and the Constitution, they would have endangered the throne itself, and probably led to a serious convulsion in this kingdom.

But I do not believe for a moment that the Queen imagines that her Crown depends upon those 500 peers. She believes, I doubt not, that her crown rests upon the great industrious multitudes of this great kingdom, and I do not doubt that as the opinion of a great multitude of men is being heard in different parts of the kingdom, and as we, your representatives, shall again go up to the House of Commons prepared as far as possible to express your views, I doubt not that the Queen, feeling the demands of her people to be just, will cordially support, in a constitutional manner, our great statesman and leader, Mr. Gladstone, in every measure that may be necessary to carry this great act of reform, and if need be to humiliate that proud and haughty body who dare to stand in the path of popular progress.

No. VIII.

Address to the Liberal Electors of Burnley, delivered in the Gaiety Theatre, Oct. 28, 1885.

Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen : I dare say you have all found that it has been most difficult to keep up with the speeches which are reported from day to day upon political questions. There is almost a Babel of political sound, and in every part of the country there are the advocates of two parties engaged in seeking to impress the public opinion with the views which belong to their respective sides. But while it may have been impossible for you to have read even a tithe of the utterances which have been delivered recently upon political subjects, I think you must have seen that there is a marked difference between the speeches of the Liberal party and those of the Tories. You will find that the Liberal party are full of hope, full of confidence, full of defined purpose as to great questions that they intend to bring forward for the benefit of the people at large. And you will find on the other side a good deal of doubt, considerable despondency, and an absolute indication of no principles likely to commend themselves to the free judgment and the intelligent minds of the great mass of the people. In all those centres of population, in all those great towns engaged in the industries of the country, you find a large body of men who look at this great Reform Bill as a means to an end, who have an intelligent purpose, and who intend, through the representatives they will send to Parliament, to make their voice heard in dealing with the great questions in view. What do you find in the agricultural counties? You find that household suffrage has produced a new political movement in that Dead Sea of national opinion. Formerly, the agricultural labourer was down-trodden, in consequence of having no political power. Now he feels that he has had a voice given to him. He has for the first time in his existence a vote. He has now some power in reference to his own well-being and his future existence, and therefore, in that Dead Sea, there are now moving evidences of progress and a desire to go forward. Yes, gentlemen, the dry bones live, and we have now a political new

birth in the counties, and I have no doubt they will reverse the opinions they pronounced when their voting power was comparatively small. What is the result of this Reform Bill? Lord Randolph Churchill the other day held up his hands, and he cried aloud, to Lord Hartington, "Come over and help us." Well, now you have heard the reply, the dignified reply, which Lord Hartington made to the beseeching appeal for him to go over and help the Tory party. He said he had no confidence in the Tory party. Why should he have confidence in the Tory party? He knows the past history of the Tory party. He knew what a Tory Government in power, not merely on sufferance as now, he knew what they did. He said, "I have no confidence in the Tory party, therefore I will have nothing to do with them." Why do the Tories appeal to Lord Hartington and the more moderate sections of our party? They believe that there are differences amongst us, and they exaggerate those differences with a view, if possible, to affect the minds of certain timid and hesitating politicians. But if they read history, if you read history, you will find that the lessons of history teach us that in all great reforms there have been these differences of opinion in the march of the Liberal party, because we have been and are now a Liberal army marching on with pioneers before us, turning up the ground and preparing the way. These pioneers are really the apostles of advanced opinion. They are the teachers of the people. They may be preaching the gospel of the rights of labour, they may be holding forth in earnest and eloquent terms in the cause of peace, they may be devoted to the reform of the drink traffic, they may be furthering great measures of civil and religious equality. Gentlemen, all these are questions in which public opinion is ripening. They are all questions in which these pioneers are doing a great work. I say all honour to the pioneers of the Liberal party. They are men who have to take up questions, work them out, and press them forward, probably when they are in a minority of opinion, when they are subject to ridicule, obloquy and misrepresentation, and frequently even to persecution. Still they go working on. They are in the advance guard of the Liberal army, and by degrees they so enlighten, so stimulate public opinion that they bring the questions up into the position of being practical politics, and then you find the whole Liberal army step forward and get up to the pioneers, and then they move in one mass and carry the great cause to absolute victory. Gentlemen, the Tory party have no pioneers. I say the Tory party have no pioneers, and they need none, because they never march. What the Tory party do is to place themselves in entrenchments and surround themselves with the stolid walls of ignorance and class interest, and behind these entrenchments they resist the attacks we make upon them. Again and again we have demolished these walls of privilege which have been held by the Tory army. We did it in the days of the great reforms, in the days of Catholic emancipation, of the repeal of the Corn Laws, and in connection with the Reform Act of 1867. There was this peculiarity on these occasions; we did not actually demolish the walls, but the garrison inside capitulated, opened the gates, accepted our conditions and hoisted our standard. When that happened a lot of the rank and file of the Tory army immediately charged their leaders with

treachery, and when people say now that we are indebted to the Tory party for all these measures of reform which were passed when the Tories were in power they should remember that it was the Liberal party that gained them by fighting against the Tory entrenchments, and the Tories have only the credit of having capitulated and accepted our terms. Take the repeal of the Corn Laws. That great Conservative statesman, Sir Robert Peel, one of the most enlightened statesmen who ever held high office in this country—he was enlightened because he allowed his great mind to be influenced by argument brought to bear upon him—when convinced that the repeal of the Corn Laws was necessary in the interests of the great body of the people of this country, determined that he would no longer prevent that great act of justice, and he passed it. What did the Tory party do with Sir Robert Peel? They turned him out. I hold in my hand an account of the transactions of those days by a careful observer. He says with regard to the course taken by Mr. Disraeli, the leader of the dissatisfied Tories, when Sir Robert acted in this statesmanlike manner—he says Mr. Disraeli hacked and mangled Peel with the most unsparring severity, and positively tortured his victim. It was a miserable and degrading spectacle. The whole mass of protectionists cheered him, making the roof ring again, and when Peel spoke they screamed and hooted at him in the most brutal manner. When he vindicated himself and talked of honour and conscience they assaulted him with shouts of derision and contemptuous ejaculations. That was the way that the great bulk of the Tory party acted towards Sir R. Peel when he yielded to the demands of the people. The Tories say they gave you the Reform Bill of 1867. Mr. Disraeli brought in a Reform Bill in that year which was altogether inadequate, and surrounded with all sorts of qualifications and restraints which would have made it of very little use indeed. But Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Bright, with a majority of Liberals in the House of Commons, passed amendments of that bill which gave it a far wider character, gave real household suffrage in boroughs, and increased the disqualification in small constituencies. The Liberal party were successful in making this great change, not Mr. Disraeli's Reform Bill. Mr. Disraeli found it necessary to capitulate, and he capitulated as Sir Robert Peel had capitulated before. What happened then? He had to bear the brunt of the dissatisfaction and irritation of the Conservative members in the House of Commons, and there was a member in the House of Commons in those days, Lord Cranborne, who, attacking Mr. Disraeli for having accepted those amendments, said that conduct like his in swallowing Radical measures would banish honourable men from the political arena, and give place to political adventurers whose professions of opinion would be regarded as only so many manœuvres to attain office. He called Disraeli an adventurer with a policy of legerdemain, and charged him with being guilty of political betrayal which had no parallel in parliamentary history. I daresay you all know that Lord Cranborne is the present Marquis of Salisbury. It is the same man who is now, by a political manœuvre, seeking to secure the Irish vote under conditions which I believe, if it goes on, will possibly bring upon his head equal contempt and condemnation from

many members of his own party. Let it be understood that the present Government only hold office by the grace of Mr. Parnell, and that they can only continue in office with his assistance. I wish to know what the price paid is, what is the transaction between these two parties. What have the Tories done for Ireland? If there had been anything in common I should never have objected, but when I look back upon the history of the Tory party in regard to Ireland, I see they have always shown the very greatest opposition to every measure calculated to promote the welfare of the Irish people and the granting of political and religious rights. What party was it that carried the Catholic Emancipation Bill? What party was it that passed the Bill for the disestablishment of the Irish Church? What party was it that passed those great measures with regard to the land of Ireland? They were all carried by the influence of the Liberal party. They were all carried in the teeth of the greatest opposition on the part of the Tory party, and I can say of my own knowledge and experience in Parliament that there have never been any measures, however small, that would have increased the political rights of Irishmen in the election of Town Councillors, members of Boards of Guardians, or give increased local power, that have not been bitterly opposed by the Tory party. I say further that whenever there have been any measures thought necessary, in consequence of the prevalence of disturbances in Ireland, for the protection of property and life, the Tory party have hounded on the Liberal Government and pressed them by every means in their power to make those measures as coercive as it was possible to make them. We, the Liberal party, are quite prepared to do justice to our Irish fellow subjects, and I would go as far as I possibly could in the direction of giving them every freedom that we in this country enjoy; but I say this, if they persist in treating us who have always been their friends, and if they by the *ignis fatuus* of some mysterious arrangement between Mr. Parnell and Lord Salisbury, if they leave us and support them, I venture to say that the end will be not to the advantage of the Irish party and certainly to the disgrace of the Tory party. Besides seeking allies amongst the Whigs and Parnellites the Tories are seeking allies from amongst the Free-traders and Protectionists. It was in '52 that Lord Derby came into power, and he was situated very much as is the present Government. He had no majority in the House of Commons to support him. It was after the great struggle for Free Trade Parliament was dissolved. What happened in all the large towns? The Tories stood as Free-traders, and in the counties they for the most part stood as Protectionists, and it was commonly said at the time that Lord Derby was running two horses on the political course. If a majority had been gained by Lord Derby there is no doubt whatever that protection would have been re-imposed. I consider that very much of the same game is being played now, and that the Tory party upon the important question before us are running two horses. I know that Lord Iddesleigh and other leading members of the Tory party profess to be altogether in favour of Free Trade; but there are a number of other members of that party, and other candidates for Parliamentary honours, who are taking quite a different line. There are men such as

Mr. James Lowther, men like Mr. Chaplin, Mr. Marriott, and others, who are advocating a Protectionist policy. I have a strong impression that the Tory party got the Trade Commission, which we have heard a deal about, simply to hush up those serious questions in regard to trade interests until the elections are over, in order to make it appear that they are doing something, and to prevent the necessity of declaring positively for one side or the other. Mr. Chaplin is coming here to assist my hon. opponent next week. It is only three or four days ago that he said, speaking in Lincolnshire, that many remedies had been proposed to improve trade, but thought they had all been useless. He proposed a moderate duty upon imported corn, a duty which would be just sufficient to enable corn to be grown at a profit in this country, a moderate duty which should cease whenever corn made over 40s. per quarter. Mr. Chaplin did not advocate that as a policy of taxing the people's food, he advocated it because he said the amount of this duty would be just sufficient to enable corn to be grown in this country at a profit. Gentlemen, I can tell you that when the Corn Laws were imposed, in the dark ages of this country, just 70 years ago, they were imposed because the landlords said that corn could not be grown under 80s. per quarter, and the Corn Laws were so arranged as to keep corn at that price. Mr. Chaplin would do the same, and would impose a duty which would prevent the free import of a prime necessity to the great body of the people of this country. I can tell him what way he can relieve the farmers better than dangling before them a proposal which would lead to such an uprising and to such a feeling among the working classes that it would sweep them and their proposal away altogether. Let Mr. Chaplin inquire amongst the farmers themselves. Let him go and ask at a Farmers' Alliance meeting what they would recommend, and the first thing he would hear of would not be an import duty upon corn, but they would say the best thing he could do for them would be to see that rents should be lowered. The people will not submit to a corn tax in order to enable landlords to keep up their rents. The Tories have got into the habit of calling the Liberals very bad names. I recollect a story about a brief which was handed to a barrister engaged in a particular case. The words of the brief were "No case, abuse the plaintiff's attorney." The Tories have no case, and they are taking to abusing the leaders of the Liberal party. I believe that the hatred of the Tory party to Mr. Gladstone which manifested itself in all kinds of denunciation, imputation, and unfair allegations has now to some extent passed, and we don't find that they are following Mr. Gladstone with that bitter animosity and violent aspersion which was the case a short time ago. I believe that Mr. Gladstone is now in a position so illustrious that it is utterly impossible for them to depreciate it by unfair and unjust imputations. But though they do not make serious charges and display their animus against Mr. Gladstone they do so in reference to Mr. Chamberlain. The other day Lord Iddesleigh called Mr. Chamberlain a Jack Cade, and this having been complained about he said, "I have been found fault with for likening the policy of Mr. Chamberlain to that of Jack Cade; but if not Cade's it is Robin Hood's policy, for the proposal is to take from the rich and give to the poor." I say it is altogether

a false imputation. It is far more true with regard to the Tories. They have for generations taken from the poor to give to the rich. Take the common lands of this country. They were the property of the poor, they belonged to the poor, and no one had a right, certainly not rich people, to take the commons from them. During the century prior to 1845 there were no less than upwards of two million acres of common land taken possession of by the rich, and since 1845 nearly half a million acres have been enclosed, so that during the last hundred years or so there have been at least $2\frac{1}{2}$ million acres of common land taken from the poor by enclosure on the part of the rich. You recollect those old lines :—

We prosecute the man or woman
Who steals the goose from off the common,
But leaves the greater felon loose
Who steals the common from the goose.

I go further, gentlemen. When we are charged with a policy of taking from the rich to give to the poor, I retaliate and ask you to look at Scotland, and see what has happened within a comparatively recent period. Not very many years ago, you might have gone over large tracts of country and seen numerous homesteads and a happy population—fathers, mothers, and children growing up under the old roof which had sheltered their fathers and grandfathers—you might have seen the sheep spreading over those rich and extensive pastures suitable for their food, and providing for the people at large by increasing the supply of food to the country. But these rich proprietors who charge us with taking from the rich in order to give to the poor, by the means of the powers which they were able to exert have absolutely swept off the surface of two millions of acres in Scotland all those sheep, all those homesteads and happy families, they have de-populated those immense districts in order to have deer forests for their own sport. We do not seek to rob the rich in order to give to the poor; but we demand the repeal of all laws which make the rich richer and the poor poorer. The Tories have not only charged members of the late Government with being guilty of political thefts of the most serious character, but they call us, the rank and file of the Liberal party, all sorts of names. They call us Socialists, Communists, Destructives, Republicans, and even Atheists. But it is very singular they never call us Democrats. Why don't they call us Democrats? Is it because Lord Randolph Churchill has taken Democracy under his special patronage? Lord Randolph Churchill calls himself a Tory Democrat. I should like to know what he means by that. I believe my hon. opponent claims the favour and support of the electors of Burnley because he wishes to go into Parliament to follow, obediently, the lead of this Tory Democrat—Lord Randolph Churchill. Perhaps he will tell me what Tory Democracy means. I dare say you will observe that the vendors of patent medicines, whether it is pills, or lotions, or powders, or embrocations, always seek to get some curious, high-sounding name that nobody can understand. Perhaps it is derived from some Greek words mixed together in a very singular fashion. Nobody can understand it, but it seems to impose upon a gullible public, who take a certain quantity of

these medicines. It appears to me that Tory Democracy has its root in the same desire, and all Tory Democrats are political quacks. But the Tories say we are dangerous. Dangerous to whom, I should like to know? We are not dangerous to the people, and I can tell you who are. For forty years previous to 1830 the Tories had absolute rule over the destinies of the country, and at the end of that time wages were lower than they were at the beginning of the forty years. They expended public money in wars to such an extent, that I believe I should understate the amount if I said it was at least £1,000,000,000. At the end of the forty years they had a debt of £800,000,000 hanging like a millstone upon the neck of the country. We have not paid it off yet, and every one of you, with the muscles of your arms, or the exercise of the power of your brains, does something every day of your life towards paying off the interest and principal of that great burden that the Tory party handed down to press upon the pockets of future generations. Not only had you these great debts, but you had all the disadvantages of an unremunerative trade and very high taxes. At that very time the Tories, in order to keep up the rents, which had risen to a high value during the Peninsular War, and when it was likely in 1815 that these might be reduced, put on the Corn Laws, so as to keep up the price of corn and to maintain the rents paid to their estates. What about the wages at the end of that 40 years? The steam-loom weavers and all the other operatives had to work $11\frac{1}{2}$ hours per day; in some cases 12 and 13 hours, and they earned only 12s. per week. The hand-loom weavers had to work in a state of semi-starvation from morning till night, and then only earned in Oldham 4s. 6d. per week, in Bolton 5s. 6d., and in Manchester 6s. 6d. per week. Gardeners, masons, and those engaged in the other branches of industry were paid similar low wages; and at the time the people were being so starved upon wages of such a small amount, the Tory landowners actually levied a toll upon their wretched pittance by raising the price of food in order to keep up their own rents. I have not time to go into the question as to what the Liberal party have done to improve the condition of the working-classes during the time they have been in power, but I hope to do so at some future meeting, and to show the people of Burnley how much they are indebted to the Liberal legislation which has been adopted. The Tories say that we are dangerous to the rights of property, as they are called. But we are no opponents of property; on the contrary I think I can say for everyone on this platform, and for the Liberal party generally, that nothing pleases us better than to see men gradually acquiring property. We like to see that in the building of houses for themselves, in the saving of money in various ways, and we say that not only ought that property to be protected, but that it is a matter of the greatest possible advantage to the country that facility should be given for the accumulation of property by the working classes generally. But they say the rights of property are in danger—the legal rights of property. Let me remind you that these legal rights of property may be the people's wrongs. It does not follow that because a right is legal that therefore it is just, and that brings me to the question which is now in the forefront of practical politics—I mean the

land question. Upon that question we, as the Liberal party, claim that the welfare of the entire people shall not be sacrificed to the selfish interests of a small class of the community. We do not want to attack property at all. We do not want to take property from any man ; but what we say is this, that under the present laws of the land there are facilities given and arrangements made which tend to tie up property in enormous amounts, and which tend by that very consequence to interfere with the proper development of the soil, and therefore to injure the interests of the people, by preventing them getting from the soil that amount of produce they ought to receive. We go further and say that it is a great danger there should be these enormous tracts of country held in such few hands, and we claim that these laws shall be altered. Lord Salisbury, by professing to be in favour of land law reform, has shown that he is only prepared to touch the very fringe of the question. He says he wishes by means of registration and facilities in the conveyance of land to lessen the expense of transfer ; but he does not touch, he does not come within a mile of, any of those proposals of reform without which any other reform becomes perfectly useless. I will give you a few statistics showing how the land in this country is held down in very few hands, and you will agree with me that laws which have a tendency to concentrate property in that way ought to be dealt with. Sixty-six persons own 2,000,000 acres ; and 100 own 4,000,000. One-sixth of the enclosed land in England is held by 280 persons, and one-fourth by 710 ; 874 persons own $9\frac{1}{2}$ millions of acres, and 1,700 persons own nearly the whole of Scotland, while 292 own one-third of Ireland. That is a most unfortunate and disadvantageous state of things to this country, and while I would not take a single acre of that land from its possessor without paying for it, I desire such an alteration of the law as would secure for every holder of land that he be the real owner, not merely the holder of a life interest in it. What happens now if Dukes or Lords owning great estates become bankrupt ?—and there have been two or three Dukes bankrupt within my own recollection, through entering into various racing and gambling speculations. Supposing a shopkeeper, or any other tradesman became unable to pay his debts, his property would be seized upon for the benefit of his creditors. But these Dukes and Lords, when they are bankrupt, their property is not seized upon. They have only a life interest in it, and instead of its being thrown upon the market and sold under a deed of bankruptcy, it is held tied to the family of the Duke in question, and when he dies the land passes into the hands of his son. You might say that these people who trusted the Duke knew that he had only a life interest in it, and therefore they were not defrauded. I do not like to use the word defrauded ; but I say that when a great Duke squanders his resources and comes to contract debts far beyond the value of his possessions, he ought to be dealt with, in the interests of society, just the same as the poorest man amongst us ; his property ought to be taken for the benefit of his creditors. By that means these estates would gradually be divided. Not only is it of the greatest importance that land should be held by a larger number of individuals, but by the way in which farmers are treated by landowners and the way in which their

tenure of land is entirely destitute of the necessary security to induce the introduction of capital into agricultural holdings, a very serious injury is done to the country. Under a better system we should not only have a more contented and prosperous agricultural population, but we should have also an enormous increase in our home trade that would lead to a very large employment of the industrial population. Mr. Gladstone in his manifesto deals with this question of land in no uncertain manner. He has long been a land reformer; he wants to deal with it in a manner which will be effectual. He does not content himself with mere words, as Lord Salisbury does, but deals with it in a practical and effectual manner. Just in the same way Lord Salisbury speaks of local government. He uses certain phrases as though he was in favour of giving a direct popular representation to the people in the different districts for the management of their local affairs. But after carefully looking at his words, I think it is quite consistent with those words, that if the Tories had a majority we should have an arrangement for the election of County Boards the effect of which would be practically to destroy the absolute control of the general body of the ratepayers over the representatives on those Boards. These County Boards are most important. They will have to deal with many things in which we are deeply interested, and we shall get rid, I hope, of a large amount of that centralization, that interference from the governing authorities in London which leads to a very large amount of unnecessary national expenditure. These County Boards will have to do with the housing of the poor, the education question, the allotment question, and also with the drink traffic. The great difficulty in the way of the better housing of the poor, and the education of the children of the poor; the great obstruction to all individual and popular progress, to all those great measures for improving and benefiting the working classes—the great difficulty is the fact that we are spending at the present moment, I am afraid to say how many millions—120 at the very least—in drink in this country; and that men who are in the habit of spending large portions of their earnings in drink will not pay an extra shilling for a respectable habitation in which they can put their families, will not pay anything if they can help it to the education of their children, and as for proposing to give them facilities for allotments it would be throwing pearls before swine. We as Liberal politicians and true Democrats want to build up this great social ladder, for true democracy is not levelling down but levelling up. We say that at the very root of that social scale, and where the steps are the most difficult, there is that clog upon every man who attempts to rise. There is that difficulty in regard to all the social arrangements of the kingdom, arising from the fact that in a great number of cases people are carried away by the influence of this accursed drink. I feel it, and you must feel it, that the ravages of this drink are such that it will be absolutely necessary for the local parliaments of this country to deal with it, and I hope, when they represent the ratepayers as licensing boards, that they will deal with it effectually. Now we find all the populous parts of the country crammed with a multitude of drinking places far in excess of any reasonable requirements of the people, all competing with one another by offering temptations to vice

and to destruction. And I say if by means of these local boards, by the expression of public opinion, we can secure the great diminution of all these temptations to drink, the local boards will do much to help on and help upwards the great mass of our population. I am bound to say that while the licensing district may be a wide area, I am quite prepared to recognise, under conditions which it is not necessary to go into at this moment, that in these several local districts there shall be a direct popular control over the licensing of the district. I have only glanced at some of the measures and objects we have in view. There are many subjects that I hope to speak about to you in the course of many speeches in this Borough. I hope to tell you something about taxation and expenditure, about the principles which I think should guide the foreign and colonial policy of this country, and other questions that may perhaps interest those of my constituents who are kind enough to come to listen to me. But before passing from the measures with which we shall have to deal in the next Parliament, I am bound to allude to one which I am sure will be of interest to you, and that is a measure to enable members of Parliament, on taking their seats, to make a declaration by affirmation instead of an oath. So far as I am concerned that would be a relief to myself. I have a great objection to taking an oath. I think it has no special sanction, and it is very apt to make people take the name of God in vain. It is not necessary, and I am quite sure the imposition of an oath upon an unwilling party is altogether a mistake, and is no protection either to the Crown or the interest of the country at large. Whatever a man's religious opinion may be, when by a proper poll that man is returned as the representative of a constituency to Parliament, it is a gross infraction of popular right to stop that man from taking his seat by imposing on him a penalty, or by interfering in any way with the exercise of his conscientious judgment. Therefore I hope that one of the first measures in the next Parliament will be one that will sweep from the Statute Book one of those old reminiscences of bigotry and superstition. And now let me say that in the coming election it is most necessary that the Liberal party should be thoroughly united. People talk about the differences amongst us, but I would like to refer you to the remarks of Lord Hartington, which he made in a speech two or three days ago at Darwen, when he laid down the principles which he thought underlie the action of the Liberal party—principles which are accepted universally by that party. Lord Hartington said:—"I think that Liberal principles have always consisted in the advocacy of the establishment of equal rights, equal political rights for all classes, in the removal of all restrictions upon liberty, upon liberty of speech, liberty of political action, the liberty of trade, upon liberty of any portion of the population to combine for the promotion of their own interests—liberty, in short, to do all and everything which it is possible to do without injury to the public and without injustice to the rights of others. I have also conceived that Liberal principles consisted in the advocacy of the widest extension to all classes of the power of governing themselves—the widest extension of political power relating to national or to local affairs. I don't pretend to say that this is an exhaustive definition of Liberalism, but I think it includes most of those things for which we have struggled in the past,

and most of those things upon which the great body of the Liberal party at this moment still insist." That is an admirable summary of the policy of the Liberal party, and I say that quite consistently with that summary Mr. Gladstone, in his great manifesto, without in any way ignoring other questions that will gradually be brought to the front by our noble pioneers, has accepted as the first work of the Liberal party some very important measures which will certainly occupy the attention of the new Parliament for some time after it has met. It is to the Liberal party you owe a considerable extension of the principles under which it is intended that in the new Parliament we should act, and it is for the furtherance of those principles that I now beg everyone of you to join in united action, in order that Burnley may give its voice on the right side. What have you in opposition to this grand category of Liberal principles and Liberal measures? In a recent speech at Aberdeen Lord Iddesleigh said:—"The Conservative party stand by the main lines of the Constitution. There they will stand unflinchingly, holding high the banner of the Constitution, saying to the people: You want a standard, rally round us—here you will find it." Rally round the Tory standard with nothing upon it. Rally round this white standard. It reminds me of the white flag of the Bourbons, who never forgot anything and never learned anything. That white flag of the Bourbons covered divine right, prerogative, privilege, and class interests; and I suspect that the white flag of the Tories covers very much the same principles. We have not a flag without words upon it. The chairman has spoken of those great words, which I hope will always be upon the flag of the Liberal party. We say, "Peace, retrenchment, and reform;" we say equal justice to all classes, and we believe that round that flag the Liberal party throughout the country will gather together. I trust that when my friend Sir Ughtred and I take our seats in the next Parliament that we shall find ourselves in the midst of a large body of good, sound Liberal members, who will be prepared with us to join heartily and with determination in carrying those measures that are now pressing for solution, and which are absolutely essential to the welfare and prosperity of the people of these Kingdoms.

SPEECHES ON IRISH QUESTIONS.

No. I.

Speech at a Meeting in the Public Hall, Warrington, on the Irish Church Question, April 22, 1868.

This question of the Irish Church is no new question so far as I am concerned. I may say so long as I have formed political views upon any matter, I have been of opinion that the Irish Church Establishment ought to be abolished. In expressing that opinion I do so in no hostility to the Episcopal Church of this country. Although not born a member of it, I am connected with that Church at the present moment, and I wish to put before this meeting strongly that the question before us to-night is not one of hostility to the Episcopal Church of England, but simply whether that Church shall be forced down the throats of the people of Ireland contrary to the wishes of the Irish nation. By some parties it is thought that our opposition to the Established Church in Ireland is an opposition to the Church of Ireland itself. I deny it. I have faith in the Episcopal Church to believe that it is independent of any support it may get from the State; that the truth of religion will spread without the support of soldiers and policemen—and that if the Protestant religion is true we may trust for the spread of it in Ireland without recourse to those abominable laws of persecution and oppression which array against us the whole of the Catholic population of Ireland, and associate with our true, as I believe, Protestant religion the idea of oppression and of injustice. We are told that if we disestablish the Episcopal Church in Ireland we shall destroy it. I say the Episcopal Church exists in many parts of the world where it is not established. In Scotland it is quite as flourishing as in Ireland, and it is not an establishment; in our colonies it is not an establishment, yet it flourishes; and in that great country, the United States of America, where all religions are placed upon an equal footing, the Episcopal Church holds its own, and on a recent occasion, the Pan-Anglican Synod—which I dare say some of our friends here no more sympathise with than I do—comprised American bishops of high distinction, and in America there is a large number of churches of the Episcopal order that flourish and commend themselves to the judgment and consciences of a great portion of the inhabitants of the United States. In appearing before you as chairman of this meeting, I am taking no course hostile to the Irish Church as a Church, but simply as an establishment forced upon the people of Ireland, and supported in consequence of the laws which we in England have passed contrary to the will of the Irish

nation at large. I believe, as a Protestant, that our religion would be far more likely to succeed in Ireland if placed upon a basis of justice. One thing is quite certain—it has not succeeded with all the support which has been given to it by the unjust laws which we have passed in this country, and the Protestants in Ireland are fewer now than they were 100 years ago. I happen to have parliamentary returns which prove that the number of Protestants has decreased during that period. I will tell you that in a moment. In 1834 the Protestants in Ireland numbered 853,160, out of a total population of barely 8,000,000, whereas the members of the Protestant Church in Ireland at the last census—1861—amounted to 678,661, out of a population of about 6,000,000—showing an absolute reduction since 1834 of 165,000. I base those figures upon the parliamentary returns. A gentleman has asked me how much the Catholic population has decreased. I am not ambitious, as some of my friends, of usurping the title of Catholic. I stand here proud of my name as a Protestant, and I say that the Catholic population has decreased to a great extent. The population of Ireland has decreased by two millions in consequence of famine and emigration. One would have supposed that, considering that the Roman Catholic population are the poorest in Ireland, they would have decreased to a great extent, and that the Protestants, with all those appliances of a State Church, and with all those clergy paid by the State—with a million sterling per annum devoted by Parliament to the support of Protestantism, and with nothing except a few thousands devoted to Catholicism, you would have supposed that Protestantism, with all those advantages, would have made some way in 34 years; but instead of that, there are 165,000 Protestants less in Ireland now than at the time referred to. So far as the Parliamentary returns are concerned, it would appear that almost every parish in Ireland has decreased in the number of its Protestant population, and that at the present time no less than 1,340 parishes—(I know a question will be raised on that subject)—no less than 1,340 parishes in Ireland, or one-half of the entire number of parishes in Ireland, contain less than 100 Protestants each. I know I shall be told that the parishes in Ireland do not correspond with the benefices held by the Established Church. It is quite true—it is quite true that there are fewer benefices in Ireland than there are parishes, the fact being that in many cases two parishes are combined in one benefice, so that you will observe a parish, as a rule, is less by one half, speaking roughly, than the extent of a benefice. Thus you have, a rough calculation, no less than 700 benefices of the English Church containing on the average no more than 100 Protestants each. Now, gentlemen, bear in mind that when I speak of 100 Protestants, I mean men, women, and children. They count the little baby at the breast in this sum-total of the Protestants of Ireland; but whatever may be the question in regard to the number in any individual parish—because there are parishes in Ireland where there are no Protestants at all—I do not think any of my friends who are ultra-Protestants—may I call them so on the present occasion?—will deny that, according to the census returns of 1861, taking the whole of Ireland, there were 4,490,583 Roman Catholics, 678,661 Episcopalians, and 565,299 Protestants of

other denominations ; so that, in point of fact, of the entire population of Ireland, according to the census of 1861, 78 out of every hundred men, women and children were Roman Catholics. It won't be denied by anybody who understands the subject. There are twelve out of every 100 of the population Episcopalians, and ten out of every 100 who are members of other denominations of Protestants. We hold it as a most unreasonable thing on the face of it that the Protestant population of Ireland should have a right to enjoy all the ecclesiastical property, amounting to one million a year, to the exclusion of 78 per cent. of the population who have equal rights with themselves. I am quite up to the arguments that will be offered on the other side, and one is, that St. Patrick was a Protestant. St. Patrick lived 1400 years ago, and it is most difficult to find out exactly what were the opinions of men who lived 1400 years ago. So far as I am concerned, I am not prepared to argue whether St. Patrick was a Protestant or a Catholic. In fact, I can tell you a gentleman who is a very eminent antiquary has very grave doubts as to whether St. Patrick existed at all. My humble opinion is, he did exist, and that he was a man of eminent Christian worth and piety, and I believe he was one of those men who, in the midst of privation and self-denial, passed through the country of Ireland, spreading the truths of our holy religion, and impressed upon that country those truths, converting those savages who inhabited it to the knowledge of the Gospel. I believe that St. Patrick was one of those great men raised by the Divine Power to be a blessing, not only to the nation among whom he laboured, but to all generations to follow. I am not concerned to consider the exact opinions that holy man might entertain, because I don't feel I am called upon, in view of the argument on the present occasion, to determine those opinions, but following St. Patrick, the Irish Church existed for 400 or 500 years, and can our friends on the other side contend that the Irish Church during that time, and the immediate successors of St. Patrick, were not associated in any way with the Church of Rome? I am not prepared to dispute that ; I am not prepared to rest my arguments upon any question which has reference to events a thousand years ago. What I say is this : that 700 years ago King Henry II. applied to the Pope of Rome to give him Ireland, and he did so as far as he could. Whatever the Pope's influence might have been previously, he had sufficient influence at that time—1156—to get from the bishops and great ecclesiastics of Ireland a vote at the Synod of Cashel, which was presided over by the Papal legate, and by that vote they sanctioned Henry II. assuming the sovereignty of Ireland in obedience to the orders of the Romish Church. I believe Dr. Massingham will not dispute the fact I am now advancing—I don't wish to misrepresent anything. I know it won't be controverted by our eminent friend. (Dr. Massingham : " Yes, it will," followed by loud laughter.) I say that in the days of Henry II. a connection between the Irish Church and the Church of Rome was acknowledged, and if Dr. Massingham controverts it, then he controverts statements made in the published accounts of his own lectures. [Dr. Massingham here rose, and said he wished to offer a word of explanation, but was received with mingled hisses and cheers, so that it was impossible for him to

make himself heard; and after telling the chairman to produce the lecture, he resumed his seat.] The chairman continued: This is not a public discussion, and as I am simply making an opening address, I cannot admit any discussion in the course of my remarks. I state as a positive fact, upon no mean authority, that in the year 1156, Pope Adrian IV. granted the sovereignty of Ireland to Henry II., which was sanctioned by the Council of Cashel, over which the Papal legate presided, and the only prelate who was absent was the Archbishop of Armagh, who afterwards expressed in public in Dublin his full concurrence with the synod which was then formed. That was 700 years ago—and from that day to this a large majority of the Irish nation have been Roman Catholics. Henry II. having had Ireland granted to him by the Pope, as a matter of course he was desirous of conquering it. At that time the word Protestant was not known, inasmuch as the whole of civilised Europe, speaking generally, was connected with the Romish Church. Henry II. and his successors down to Henry VIII., carried on a series of wars with a view of conquering Ireland, and the result was that in the reign of the last-named King, now nearly 400 years ago, the English power did not extend to more than about 50 miles from the city of Dublin, the rest of the island remaining under the power of the Irish chieftains and of the Irish kings. King Henry VIII. carried on his wars in Ireland, and was followed by Queen Elizabeth. She was followed by the Stuarts and Cromwell, under whom wars of aggression were made with a view to conquer Ireland in the interest of England. During these wars almost the whole of the property in Ireland was confiscated, and taken from the original proprietors and handed over to the supporters of the English Crown, who then formed part of the English army. In fact, a member of the House of Commons said, the other day, that the aristocracy in the South of Ireland at the present time consisted for the most part of the descendants of the troopers and trumpeters of Cromwell's army. I believe there is no question about the fact that England in the course of these wars did confiscate a very great part of the property held originally by Irish families; but in the reign of Henry VIII. there was another element brought into the strife. At the time of the Reformation a new principle came into play, and that was an attempt on the part of Protestant England to force upon Catholic Ireland the opinions which they believed to be true, namely, the Protestant opinions in matters of religion. The effect of these wars was to devastate the country, and in the case of Cromwell it was carried to such an extent that at the present time the curse of Cromwell is the bitterest curse that the Irish peasantry feel. I can tell you in the time of Cromwell this persecuting spirit, and this intention on the part of England to compel the Catholic country of Ireland to adopt Protestantism, was carried to such an extent, that every Catholic in Ireland was required to banish himself from that part of Ireland in which he had his homestead, and go and live in the province of Connaught, and the attempt was made by the military to force the Roman Catholics to remove from the other three great provinces into that barren one of Connaught, there to starve or die. An expression common in Ireland at the present time, shows how these great acts of

injustice tend to exasperate the people from generation to generation. "To hell or to Connaught" was the expression of the dragoons in those days to the Roman Catholics, and that expression might be heard in the present day. William III., one of the wisest monarchs who ever ruled over England, and for whom I entertain the greatest reverence—and you must bear in mind that in alluding to Cromwell I speak of him as representing the intolerant bigotry of his age—I do not wish to detract from the glory or fame of Cromwell, who was one of the great heroes of the world. But he merely acted in accordance with the intolerant spirit of the age in which he lived. Ireland having been conquered nominally, was in subjection to England during the reigns of Ann and William III., and a number of penal laws were passed. These began in the last century, about 160 years ago. It is far more important to consider what happened at that time than what happened 1,400 years ago. Under these penal laws the public worship of Irish Roman Catholics was placed under severe restrictions. The priests were exposed to penalties, to imprisonment, and transportation in the exercise of some of their religious offices, even extending to the burial of the dead. I am now giving you the laws which were simply acted upon, and not those which were found to be impracticable. I could give a catalogue of laws which were passed, and which would horrify you if detailed. I could tell you that the archbishops, bishops, and clergy of the Irish Church were treated as malefactors by Act of Parliament. Certain sums of money, varying from £100 for a bishop down to a few pounds for a clergyman were given to persons who would discover any such parties with a view to bring them to punishment. I will not do so, but will tell you what laws were actually put in force. Bribes and rewards from £20, and which were subsequently increased to £30 and even £40, were offered by Act of Parliament to any priest who apostatised from the Roman Catholic Church and became a Protestant in the reign of William III. and Mary. I am not going to speak to a single thing not supported by facts, but these bribes were offered to Roman Catholic priests to turn Protestants. Catholic schoolmasters were banished from Ireland, and no Roman Catholic was allowed to have his child taught by any member of the Church of Rome. All the roads of honourable ambition and social advancement were closed to Catholics. They were ineligible to fill the office of member of Parliament or of municipal corporations, and were debarred from the elective franchise, simply because they were Catholics. I say all roads of honourable ambition and social advancement were closed to Roman Catholics. They could hold no commission in the army or navy, no position under the Crown, and were excluded from every profession except that of medicine, and could not purchase any property. I am speaking of the penal laws passed 160 years ago. A Roman Catholic could not purchase any property nor hold it under lease for any longer term than 21 years. If he cultivated waste lands and improved them so as to produce a profit greater than one-third, the rent-right of it passed over to the first Protestant who could prove that he was acquiring profit more than one-third in excess of the rent. He could only carry on trade subject to restrictions and special privileges.

Thus in the social and domestic circle these infamous laws interfered. And I ought first to mention that even in ordinary luxuries they interfered with a man's comfort, inasmuch as he could not possess a horse worth more than £5. If he did happen to become possessed of one worth more, any Protestant could, for £5, buy it from a Roman Catholic whatever its value. Not only in small conveniences, but in the actual comforts of life these laws invaded the domestic privacy. A Catholic was not allowed to marry a Protestant wife—and on proof of the ceremony being furnished the officiating priest was liable to the penalty of death. If a Roman Catholic had property, any child of his who chose to declare that he was a Protestant could at once get possession, by law, of a stated portion of it, and if he was the eldest son he could get the whole of the estate, apportioning to his father simply the means of income to support him during his life, and after his death it passed into his son's hands, to the exclusion of the widow and of his brothers and sisters. Some gentlemen asked whether these penal laws existed now. I am happy to say they do not. Why do they not exist? When were they repealed? This is a matter of history. When the war broke out between England and America—that fierce war between two members of the same family, carried on to gratify the feeling of one of the most stupid monarchs who ever reigned in England—it was thought necessary to conciliate to some extent the inhabitants of Ireland, and a number of these penal laws, no longer since than 1778 and 1782, were repealed. I may tell you further, that when the French Revolution took place, and led to that great war between England and France, another portion of these penal laws was repealed, because the English Government felt they could not afford to have Ireland dissatisfied when they were in the face of a foreign foe. England's difficulty was Ireland's opportunity, and these penal laws, to a great extent, were repealed in consequence. No later than 1829, a time which some of the gentlemen on the platform and many whom I am addressing can probably remember, one of the last badges of slavery, the ineligibility of a Catholic to represent his fellow-countrymen in the House of Commons of the United Kingdom, was removed by the passing of the Catholic Emancipation Act of 1829. That was brought about in consequence of Mr. O'Connell being returned for the County of Clare. He went to Parliament to take his seat, although a Roman Catholic, and the Duke of Wellington was obliged to concede Catholic Emancipation, because he said if it were not done, it would lead to civil war in Ireland, and contrary to his convictions that restriction was removed under compulsion, and not conceded as a measure of justice. But they were not all removed. There is another great badge of slavery still remaining. You have done away with the penal laws, and given to the Irish people something like civil freedom; but you seek to carry on the policy which has been so disastrous in former generations by persisting in maintaining the influence of a small minority of the country in opposition to the wishes of the large majority of the members of religious societies in Ireland. I am going to state facts, which I don't believe can be contradicted. No doubt some arguments may be advanced, but I shall leave with you, gentlemen, certain facts. Accord-

ing to the last census—and if any of our friends here know better than the last census, they are better informed than I am—there were 693,000 members of the Episcopalian Church in Ireland—men, women, and children, down to the child just born. These 693,000 members of the Irish Church, out of a population of, I suppose, six millions, had for their religious requirements—twelve bishops, 33 deans, 34 archdeacons, 25 precentors, 22 chancellors of dioceses, nine canons, 178 prebends, 1510 beneficed clergy, and 457 curates. I am particularly anxious you should attend to this part of the subject, because you may argue a great deal, but you cannot destroy facts—facts which are afforded by the returns presented to Parliament. All these Church dignitaries and beneficed clergy amount in the whole to 2,280 men, bishops and clergy, for a population of 693,000 Protestants—a population, mark you, not more than equal to that of Liverpool, Manchester, and Salford combined. These 2,280 persons enjoy a revenue variously estimated, but which I believe is under-estimated at one million a year. In order to give my friends on the opposite side the very best and most favourable state of the case I have spoken of Ireland as a whole, but most of you know that it is divided into four provinces—Ulster, Munster, Connaught, and Leinster. It so happens that in Ulster there is about the same number of Protestants as there are of Roman Catholics. Ulster is generally pointed to as a very favourable illustration by Protestant Episcopalians in support of their opinions. In this province the total number of Protestants, reckoning all denominations, is nearly equal to the Roman Catholics, but the Episcopalians do not amount to more than one-third of the Roman Catholics. I take other parts of Ireland. Mark you, these archbishops, bishops, deans, deacons, and beneficed clergy, spread all over Ireland, whether there are Protestants or not. I find, taking the other provinces of Ireland—Munster, Connaught, and Leinster—the number of Protestants in these three great divisions of Ireland, including, as I have already stated, the men, women, and children, that the members of the Established Church amount to only 288,531, or rather more than one-half of the population of Liverpool. I want you to keep in mind this fact—because if you talk about numbers, and neglect to keep these facts in mind, it is difficult to compare them. They have no less than 1,617 clergy, including one archbishop, seven bishops, about a score of deans, besides archdeacons and other ecclesiastical dignitaries. When I commenced my speech, there was some question about parish benefices. I knew it would be raised, because it is the old stock argument; but in reference to the grand total there can be no question, because it is proved on the census returns that in Leinster, Munster, and Connaught, there is only a Protestant population of about one-half the size of Liverpool, and they have no less than 1,617 bishops and other ecclesiastics to look after their spiritual wants. I come now to a smaller district, and perhaps it may be better within the comprehension of some of the gentlemen before me. There happens to be a diocese in Ireland called the diocese of Waterford, Lismore, Cashel, and Emly. The reason that diocese is called by these names is this: in 1833 each of these four bishoprics was separated, and there was one bishop over each. It was so gross an absurdity that there

should be four bishoprics for so small a number of Protestants, that by an Act of Parliament, passed in 1833, these four bishoprics were rolled into one, and it is now one bishopric consisting of what was formerly four. My friend says "Hear, hear." You will suppose by joining these four dioceses into one a respectable Protestant diocese would have been established, but the number of Protestants did not amount to more than about one-half the size of Warrington. I will give you the numbers, so that there shall be no mistake, because it is not the extent of parishes or benefices—let me warn you against all this humbug. We will get down to dioceses, in order that there may be no mistake. The population of this diocese—that is to say, the Episcopalian population—is only about one-half the size of Warrington. The exact number in 1861 was 13,853, including men, women, and children. Let there be no mistake. The population of the north-east and south-west wards of this borough was about the same to within a hundred of the population of that diocese. You know how many representatives you have in the Town Council for these wards in Warrington. Well, for these Protestants in the diocese named, there is a bishop at £4,400 a year, a dean and chapter with 105 beneficed clergy at £31,000 a year, and 40 curates at £3,414, making a grand total of 146 bishops and clergy. The population was no greater than the north-east and north-west wards of Warrington, and for it they had a bishop and clergy receiving an income of £38,814 a year, being at the rate of £3 per head per annum for every man, woman, and child in that diocese. I can very easily tell that gentleman where it comes from. It comes originally from the land of Ireland. It was an income that was enjoyed from the year 1100, when the Irish Church submitted without question to the Romish Church, by the Roman Catholics of Ireland up to the time of Henry VIII. I will go further than that. I don't say it is an income depending at all upon what people believed hundreds of years ago. It matters nothing to me that 1,000 years or 1,400 years ago St. Patrick was a Protestant—it matters not to me in my argument that 1,000 years ago the Church of Ireland was not connected with the Church of Rome. What I say is this—we, as Englishmen, have a right to dispose of our national property. If France, by invasion, had overcome this country, and imposed by force upon Protestant England Roman Catholicism, and one-twelfth of our population was a Roman Catholic population enjoying all the revenue of the ecclesiastical domains in opposition to 78 per cent. of English Protestants, I say we should writhe under it. If that was the case, I for one, loyal as I hope I am to the Government of this country, if I saw the Roman Catholic religion imposed upon us by the French Emperor or any foreign power, I would have lived and died a rebel. I know it has been said that Government seeks to establish the truth in religion. Governments are the last in the world to settle what is true in religion. They are composed of corrupt and worldly people, who have no concern in the real interests of religion, and therefore are not safe to be entrusted with such power. I will tell you what is safe to leave. It is safe to leave to the great body of the people of any country to chose its own religion; and as that people change, and as opinions progress, let them accomplish, if they think fit, another basis different to the corruptions or superstitions that may

have been supported by their forefathers ; but I would never seek by coercion to support what I believe to be true, but I would leave it to that great doctrine that the truth is mighty and shall prevail. I have alluded to what would be the case in England, and I wish for a moment you would put yourselves in the position of the Irish people. It is no question now for us to discuss as to what is true in religion. I stated at the commencement that I hold Protestant opinions quite as strongly as any gentleman on this platform. I believe if it came to a narrow inquiry, it would be found that in all those great elements of Protestantism which make it an important power in this world, I hold them even to a greater extent than some of the gentlemen who have appeared this evening to uphold them ; but I wish you to put yourselves in the position of that large number of Catholic inhabitants of Ireland who now feel that after ages of conquest, of wretchedness, and cruelty—after their forefathers have had their land taken from them in a manner which can never be remedied or restored, I wish you to put yourselves in the position of those men who feel that this Irish Protestant Church is supported by the State, for the benefit of a small minority of the population. I know you would find and feel that the Irish Church Establishment was a galling chain about your necks, a badge of conquest and spoliation on the part of a dominant power, and would feel that although the ideas and arguments might be very much against you, to desert that persecuted Church of your forefathers, was really an act of treason towards their memory ; and you would cling closely to that Church, although it might be an erroneous Church, just as the Irish people have clung to theirs in the face of all those confiscations, in the face of all those banishments, in the face of all those penal laws, and just as at the present time they remain in the main Catholics, although in addition to this power of persecution, there has been a great power of wealth and corruption brought to bear against them to their overthrow. Because of the passing of the Catholic Emancipation Bill in 1829, we are told that it is unreasonable to ask for any disestablishment of the Irish Church. Because these penal laws are repealed, we are told that it is a great injustice to have it abolished, and that therefore persons subjected to any injustice had no right to ask for its abolition, and that they had no right to advocate its repeal. I say the fact of the English people having passed laws of such an objectionable character, and subsequently repealed those laws, is no reason why we should not repeal every act of injustice now pressing upon the Irish people ; therefore I think the argument about Roman Catholic emancipation is no argument against any further measure of justice being conceded. It is said there is some objection on the ground of the Act of Union. Ireland was united to England, and it was sanctioned by the Parliament of England and the Parliament of Ireland, and that sanction included the Irish Protestant Church. I quite admit that ; but by whom was it passed ? It was passed first of all by an English Parliament, in which no Roman Catholic could take his seat, and the corruptions of which, on the part of the old borough-mongers, led to that great Reform Bill of 1832, which to a great extent purified the House from those corrupt members. It was also passed by the Irish Parliament, from which the

Catholics—a large majority of the people of Ireland—were positively excluded. No Roman Catholic could sit in the House of Commons of Ireland, and the Irish Parliament, like our own at that time, was corrupt; and so much was this the case, that at the time the Act of Union was passed, the English Government did not consult the people of Ireland—the Roman Catholic people of Ireland were of no account in the matter. They had to buy over the Irish members. I was going to say they spent a million and a half in buying up the borough-mongers of that Irish Parliament. They gave £15,000 to each man who possessed a borough, as some compensation for withdrawing that privilege from Ireland to England. I will give you a case. The Lord Bishop of Ossory, at that time, by virtue of his ecclesiastical property, had power over some insignificant village whose name I forget, and the Bishop claimed his £15,000 among the rest, in consequence of having this right to return a member for this little village withdrawn from him. Then, I say, that the Act of Union which passed the Parliaments of England and Ireland, could not be fairly considered as representing either one nation or the other, and could not be taken as a decision as to what should be done as a matter of justice between two countries. I don't think I need dwell upon another objection. It is said the Coronation Oath will interfere in this matter; that the Crown has taken an oath to preserve intact the Irish Church. I have no doubt that George III. had some notion of this kind, and in that very enlightened mind, contrary to the opinion of some of his wisest ministers, thought it was contrary to his Coronation Oath to allow a measure of Catholic Emancipation, and in consequence of the stupidity of that old man, under the Coronation Oath refused in that day this great act of justice, of emancipation to Ireland, and it was deferred from year to year. In spite of the advice of the most eminent statesmen it could never be carried during his life, and, as I told you, it was not carried until George IV. was king, and under the influence of threatened rebellion in Ireland. But those gentlemen who say "Hear, hear" to the Coronation Oath forget our throne is not now occupied by a George III. The occupant of the British throne at the present moment is a constitutional monarch. We all love the Queen of England, because we believe she supports the dignity of her high situation with a full regard of her constitutional duties; and I might say, in allusion to the work she recently published, that that insight afforded of her domestic course of life has really given to my loyalty a feeling of love and affection, and I know we may safely look up to the Queen as a monarch who will do everything necessary for the good of her subjects. I know that there is another thing which will be said by the defenders of the Irish Church, and which has been said of other great abuses; not that they were prepared to defend them, but to lop off, as in 1833, certain excrescences. Put yourselves in the position of the Irish people, and I say that in the manipulation of this great evil of the Irish Church, no chopping off excrescences will do away with that sense of injustice that the millions of Ireland feel in the existence of a dominant sect representing so small a proportion of her population. Do not suppose for a moment that it is in the interest of the Church of England there should be any dealing

with this question in this pottering manner. I believe it is for the Church of England to separate herself, so far as she can, from these elements of injustice. I believe the best plan is for the Church of England to dissociate itself, so far as Ireland is concerned, from all these elements of injustice; don't let them suppose because they are disestablished the force of their influence will be destroyed. I firmly believe after the disestablishment the Protestant Church in Ireland will be far more powerful—I say far more powerful than it is now, associated as it is with the ideas of injustice and oppression. Let my friends in the Church of England who cannot see as I do in this matter have some faith. Let them think of the time—a very few years ago—when a large number, some 400 or 500 ministers of the Established Church of Scotland walked out in a matter of conscience from that Establishment, went out into the country, appealed to the voluntary support of the inhabitants of Scotland, and they got it. The Free Church of Scotland—those ministers who left the Established Church of Scotland, and left all their livings, their incomes, their homesteads, everything they possessed in connection with that Church—they went forth in the confidence of truth, in the faith of right principles, and they were supported in appealing to the voluntarism of the nation; and at the present they represent a sect as the Free Church of Scotland far more important in numbers, and I may say it with truth, than any other Church. I beg that it may be understood that I yield to no man on this platform or in this room, in my desire to promote the interests of truth. I shall be delighted when this disestablishment takes place, because it will take place. I make no disguise of my opinions. I say I shall be delighted, and if the Protestants of Ireland, representing as they do to a great extent the wealth and the property of the country, are not able to support the missionary instrumentality of the Protestant Church in Ireland, I shall be prepared to subscribe with cheerfulness in support of its ministers; and I believe that thousands and hundreds of thousands of Protestants in England would be glad to give that measure of support; and we shall feel we are relieved as members of the Established Church of England from a positive disgrace and stigma. And while we appeal to England, and say we stand entirely upon our own merits and the truth of our opinions, we shall not be dragged back by the fear that we are trying by all the force of accumulated centuries of injustice and wrong to compel our Irish fellow-countrymen, who have equal rights with ourselves to their own opinions, to submit to ours. I believe that the measure, as I have said, the disestablishment of the Church in Ireland, will in a very short time take place. No mere opposition at a meeting like this of a limited character, can delay its consummation. I am quite aware it won't take place in the present House of Commons, but as in the Reform Bill of 1832, one of the first measures of that renovated Parliament was to lop off some of the greatest abuses and greatest excrescences of the Irish Church, so I believe one of the first acts of the new Parliament, which will be very shortly summoned together, and which will represent to a much greater extent than has ever been done the general mind and will of the free English people, I believe one of the first acts of that renovated and new Parliament will be to strangle,

as with the hand of a giant, that grand enormous injustice that has been the growth of centuries, and is now pressing down upon the energies of that Irish Church. I believe the new Parliament in taking that course will do what I know our beautiful Liturgy of the Church of England so well inculcates as the best measure, "for the safety, honour, and welfare of our Sovereign and her dominions;" and, as a result of that measure, it will do away with all those evil grounds of bitterness in our fellow-countrymen's mind; it will sweeten the political breath of the Irish people; it will increase the loyalty which they feel to the English Crown; and I believe to that extent—again quoting that beautiful prayer for the House of Commons—I believe to that extent we shall settle the affairs of this country "upon the best and surest foundation that peace and happiness, truth and justice, religion and piety, may be established among us for all generations."

No. II.

An Address to the Irish Electors of Burnley, delivered in the Iron School, Salford, Feb. 8, 1876.

During the whole course of my political life I have been drawn into close connection with Irishmen in their struggles for liberty; I have been associated with them in many contests for the purpose of improving their position; therefore, in coming to Burnley, I come not as a stranger to Irish people, but as one who has been in the habit of meeting with them for many years past. I feel most keenly that the English nation in former generations has been guilty of a great amount of injustice to their fellow-countrymen across the Channel. When I look back for three or four centuries, I find that the English people under their sovereigns, by means of invading armies, have confiscated to a great extent the land belonging to the old Irish race, and planted upon the land a number of families of English and Scotch extraction, whose descendants own the soil down to the present hour. I know very well, too, that in the Irish mind, up to the present moment, there is a feeling that in past ages great wrongs were done to the ancestors of the Irish of the present day. Those wrongs were done by the invading English armies, and therefore I always feel, in the light of such circumstances, desirous of giving, as far as possible, a full measure of justice and kindness to the descendants of those who to a great extent were dealt with unjustly in former generations. When I look back for the last three hundred years, I find that there has been a great attempt made by the English people to enforce upon the Catholic community a recognition of the Protestant faith. Now, although I am a Protestant, I trust that I have that spirit of Christian charity and Christian kindness which would lead me to wish that every man in the three kingdoms should be allowed the free exercise of his religious conscience, and to approach that great Father of us all in that mode in which, according to that conscience, he believed that Heavenly Father should be

worshipped. But that was not the case with the English Protestant Party who some 200 years ago attempted by every means in their power to force Protestantism upon the Catholics of Ireland. In those days the military went through Ireland and drove, or sought to drive, by military force, all the Catholics out of the rich provinces of Ireland on to one of its most barren provinces—Connaught—and there to starve or die. Those persons who then rode rough-shod over the Irish people were in the habit of using the expression—"To Hell or Connaught." And the very fact of that expression, which so marked the cruelty of the people who in those days attempted to force an alien religion upon the Irish people—the very fact that those words are remembered to the present day, shows that those memories must entail a feeling on the part of the Irish people which requires gentle usage, and that we who belong to the English nation should seek as far as possible by kindness and goodwill, to blot out for ever those memories which have been handed down from father to son from generation to generation. I will not dwell on those other measures adopted in those days and continued until about 100 years ago, but I may mention two or three things done in those days—laws passed to enforce the people of Ireland to become Protestants instead of Catholics. By one law, bribes of from £20 to £40 per year were offered to any Catholic priest who would apostatise from the Catholic faith and become Protestant. Roman Catholic schoolmasters were banished from Ireland, and the people were not allowed to have their children taught except by Protestant schoolmasters. Marriages between Catholics and Protestants were absolutely prohibited, and the priest officiating at such a marriage was liable to the penalty of death. In reference to property, no Catholic could hold or purchase any landed property for more than 21 years. The Catholic was not allowed to possess certain luxuries; even in the matter of horses, he was not allowed to possess a horse worth more than £5, and if he did happen to possess a horse worth more than £5, then the first Protestant he met who chose might force him to sell it to him (the Protestant) for £5. But more than that, if a Catholic cultivated waste land and made a bog into a smiling field producing harvests of food for the people, and brought the value up to a certain point, then any Protestant who chose to inform upon him that he had land of such a value had the right to take possession of it. But perhaps one of the worst laws that existed was the one which provided that if at the death of a Catholic possessed of property, any one of his children chose to declare himself a Protestant, he might come in for a very much larger share of the property than the other children who continued to profess their father's religion, and if that one who declared himself to be a Protestant happened to be the eldest son he could take possession of the whole of his father's property to the exclusion of the rest. I mention those matters because I think it is right to represent to the persons who complain that the Irish people have their bitter memories how it is that there are these bitter memories in the minds of the Irish people. In addition to these I have mentioned laws existed until a comparatively recent period by which no Catholic could possess either a Parliamentary or a Municipal franchise, laws through which a

Catholic could not be a member of Parliament, or a town councillor, or a magistrate; laws which provided that Catholics could hold no position in the army or navy, nor any place under the Crown, nor follow any profession but that of medicine. And who supported those laws? The Tory party, the ancestors of the hon. gentleman who is standing as the constitutional candidate for the borough of Burnley. The persons who sought to repeal those measures were the Liberal party of this country and of Ireland, who have always shown themselves friends to the removal of Irish disabilities. Alluding to my hon. opponent's auditors reminds me that in a speech delivered at Healey Wood, Mr. Lindsay alluded to my remarks upon Ireland, and in the course of his observations Mr. Lindsay said that I have been attempting to make the Irish people believe—no Englishman could possibly fall into such a mistake—that the emancipation of Ireland from all those evils was the result of Liberal legislation alone; and then Mr. Lindsay went on to say that Catholic Emancipation (which had been, no doubt, a very great measure for the emancipation of the Catholics of Ireland) was the work of a Tory statesman—the Duke of Wellington. Well, it is perfectly true that the Duke of Wellington did pass that measure of Catholic Emancipation, but what were the facts? From 1800, the time of the union, to 1829, when Catholic Emancipation took place, during the whole of those 29 or 30 years, the great Liberal party, and all statesmen having Liberal opinions in the British House of Commons, endeavoured to wring from the Tory Government, Tory statesmen, and the Tory King, that common right they insisted Ireland should possess. Mr. Lindsay said the Duke of Wellington, a Tory, passed Catholic Emancipation, and that his grandfather, also a Tory, seconded the motion in the House of Lords. But let us inquire for a moment into the circumstances of that great Act. For the 29 years from the year 1800 the greatest patriots and leading Liberals of the time were engaged in the House of Commons and in the House of Lords in claiming for Catholics the rights which belonged to them—the right of sitting in the House of Commons and having political privileges. Who were the men who claimed those rights? They were such men as Grattan. Was Grattan a Tory? He was one of the highest, one of the noblest patriots that ever lived. Was Plunkett a Tory? Plunkett took up the mantle when Grattan let it fall, and Grattan and Plunkett, for nearly a quarter of a century, were constantly pressing on the English Parliament the rights they claimed on behalf of their Catholic fellow-subjects in Ireland. But there was another distinguished man—an Englishman—Henry Brougham, afterwards Lord Brougham, one of the most powerful speakers of his day. Was he a Tory? Did he belong to the Duke of Wellington's band? No; he was one of the leading Liberals of his day. Another man, whose figure I remember amongst my earliest recollections, a man to the language of whom I have listened with thrilling interest, when he has been advocating the rights of the people—Daniel O'Connell. I well remember O'Connell standing up in a grand enormous meeting at Manchester—held on the site of what is now the Free Trade Hall—called for the purpose of claiming from the British House of Commons the right to have untaxed

bread for the people; and do you think that if any man had told O'Connell that he belonged to the Tory party that he would not have spurned him? Did not Mr. Disraeli, the leader of the party represented by Mr. Lindsay, call Mr. O'Connell the "big beggar man of Ireland," to which Mr. O'Connell, stung by the remark, replied, "My firm opinion in reference to the honourable gentleman is that he is the lineal descendant of the impenitent thief on the Cross." Mr. Disraeli challenged O'Connell, and if O'Connell would have exposed his noble breast to the shot of Mr. Disraeli, that hon. gentleman, now leader of her Majesty's Government, might have had the misfortune to stop his career. O'Connell declined to meet Mr. Disraeli, because, having once fought a duel, and being unfortunate enough to hit his adversary, who died, he registered a solemn vow in Heaven he would never fight a duel again. Thus you see that the man who is now the Tory leader was a personal enemy of O'Connell, challenged him to fight, and scathed him in the House of Commons by all the revilings he could invent; and yet you are asked by Mr. Lindsay to believe that it was the Tory party that gave emancipation! Do you think O'Connell would believe such humbug as that? In the days before Catholic Emancipation, O'Connell formed a great Catholic Association, agitated the whole of Ireland, held monster meetings, sent petitions to Parliament, and, in fact, adopted every expedient to compel the British Legislature to pass the measure, which was opposed by the Duke of Wellington, Sir Robert Peel, and the whole Tory party. Mr. O'Connell, though a Catholic, and therefore by law excluded from the House of Commons, was returned by the constituency of County Clare, and who was it that opposed his taking the seat? It was the Tory Government, headed by the Duke of Wellington. But, when it was known that throughout Ireland there was a great amount of discontent seething in the hearts of the people, when it was found that the great county of Clare insisted upon sending O'Connell as its representative, those wise Tory statesmen learned a lesson they ought to have known before, and they granted under force and pressure that which they ought to have granted through free good-will. The Duke of Wellington told King George IV. that the Government could not answer for the peace of the kingdoms unless this measure of Catholic emancipation was conceded, and then it was, when they could not refuse the measure any longer, that one of those noble lords who was the grandfather of Mr. Lindsay—one of the Prime Minister's Tory satellites that had always been against Catholic emancipation until that moment—in order to gratify the Duke of Wellington, his Tory leader, agreed to second the motion for Catholic emancipation in the House of Lords. If I had a grandfather like Mr. Lindsay's—a grandfather who had been opposing public rights through the great part of his Parliamentary career, and then at the last moment, under pressure, swallowed up all his previous convictions in order to gratify the Government and make things pleasant all round—I would keep such a matter in the background, and certainly would not have boasted of it to the intelligent and enlightened inhabitants of the borough of Burnley. Thus the great measure of Catholic Emancipation was forced upon the Tories and carried

by the Duke of Wellington against his will, in order, as he himself said, to prevent a civil war; whereas, if they had done what the Liberal party had wished them to do twenty years before, they would have saved a great amount of heartburning, and given the Irish people satisfaction, so far as that measure was concerned, and done it with a good will. But, at the same time, whilst with one hand the Tory Government gave Catholic emancipation to Ireland, with the other they robbed the Irish people of a cherished liberty by disenfranchising large numbers of the tenant farmers, raising the qualification of voters from a 40s. rental to one of £10 a year, and that, no doubt, if Mr. Lindsay's grandfather had been asked by the Duke of Wellington he would have seconded in the House of Lords. They also brought in a law to put a stop to the great Catholic association O'Connell had instituted for the maintenance of Catholic rights, and as far as possible to fetter the rights of the people of Ireland to meet together for political purposes. Now, gentlemen, I ask you to contrast with these acts of the Tory party the great measures of relief which Mr. Gladstone has passed in regard to the Irish Church and Irish land—measures which have done much to conciliate and render more prosperous the suffering people of Ireland, and which I myself had the great pleasure of supporting in Parliament. Lord O'Hagan, the Chancellor of Ireland under the last Government, expressed the opinion that further improvements ought to be made in the Irish land laws, with the view of giving still more security to the tenants. I understand, too, that considerable feeling exists amongst the Irish people, who think themselves not fairly dealt with in regard to the Parliamentary and municipal franchise in Ireland. I do not think they are fairly dealt with, and I cannot, for the life of me, understand why an Irishman should not have a vote on the same terms as an Englishman. Indeed, my opinion is that the proper course to govern Ireland is to put the Irish people under equal laws with Englishmen, and give to them any advantage now enjoyed by Englishmen which they do not enjoy. And not only in Ireland but in England, also, the laws relating to the franchise require alteration. Especially do we need a re-distribution of Parliamentary seats, for, as things are at present the country is not all fairly represented. As an instance of this I may refer to the fact that whilst my successful opponent at the Warrington election of 1874 was returned with 2,380 votes, I was rejected when I stood for South-east Lancashire, although I received about 7,500 votes. I may also mention to you the case of the borough of Port Arlington, the member for which was returned by 79 votes. But Ireland's grievance in this respect is undoubtedly greater than ours, and if I am returned by you to Parliament I will support any measure of which the object is to remedy that grievance. I have always endeavoured to promote the interests of the Irish people, and assisted the Irish party in the House of Commons in their efforts to get attention drawn to the injustices which the Irish had undoubtedly had to complain of; and I am pleased to think that by my action in this respect I have gained the esteem of Mr. Butt and others of the Irish members. At the present time a demand is being made by the Irish party in regard to which I would willingly assist them, were I again in the House of Commons. I refer to the question of the Irish political prisoners. After

a careful consideration of that matter, knowing that those men had been in punishment for so many years, I think that the Government should defer to the wishes and feelings of the Irish nation for granting a political amnesty; and if a measure is brought forward with that object, and I am a member of the House of Commons, I will vote for it, however small the minority. I believe that if I had the opportunity of supporting and, if need be, of speaking in the House of Commons in favour of that measure, the adhesion of an independent English member would be felt by Mr. Butt and other leaders as being no inconsiderable addition to the pressure that would be brought upon the Government, and you must bear in mind that the present Government will never do anything of that kind until they are forced to it. And if you expect that the young gentleman learned in the law who will go to Parliament under circumstances which certainly will induce him, so far as he conscientiously can, to keep on the right of Mr. Disraeli's good opinion—if you suppose that a young gentleman in that position would make himself disagreeable to Mr. Disraeli, losing any prospect of future promotion, you have a confidence in the position of affairs which will entitle me to think that Mr. Lindsay is not far wrong when he supposes that the inhabitants of Burnley can be gulled. I hope that when I represent Burnley I shall soon form the friendship of Mr. Sullivan, who has spoken in such complimentary terms of me. I will also take the liberty of referring to a letter from Mr. Butt. I will read just one passage from that letter, which the chairman has just handed to me, for I think I shall be justified in doing so. The passage is—"I can only say that it would give me most sincere pleasure to see you again in the House of Commons, and that, I am sure, there you would be, as before, a zealous and steady supporter of equal rights for Ireland." I must now conclude by again stating that I cannot believe that Irishmen will vote for a Tory, but I hope that the Irish electors of Burnley will help to swell the majority by which I will be returned to Parliament.

No. III.

Speech delivered in the Public Hall, Warrington, Dec. 22, 1880.

My hon. friend, Mr. McMinnies, M.P., in the very able speech he has just delivered, alluded to the fact that in some of the greatest victories the Liberal party have ever achieved the leaders have spoken with no uncertain sound, but have brought forward measures of a thorough character, not half-hearted, but the Bill, the whole Bill, and nothing but the Bill. The total, the immediate, and the unconditional repeal of the Corn Laws. That was the sort of cry our leaders had in former days. Let me tell you that if you look back for the last 50 years, you will find that not only in the great triumphs of the Liberal party have the leaders brought forward strong and decisive measures, but the Liberal party have been united. You know very often that in quiet political times there is a great diversity of opinion amongst us.

It so happens that the Liberals have the habit of thinking, which some of our opponents have not got, and the result is that they form different opinions, and you hear of what are called crotchets. The Liberals, entertaining a strong opinion with reference to some particular question, form associations, get up public meetings and lectures, and they try, if possible, to induce the great Liberal party to inscribe their particular question on the Liberal banner. That goes on in so many quarters that people constantly say the Liberal party is disunited, but the moment certain circumstances occur which prove to the nation that there is a great evil that wants rooting out, when it is seen clearly that there is an evil pressing upon the happiness and prosperity of the people—then the Liberal party spring into new life and strength. Then it is that this great question swallows up all these small sectional matters, and Liberals, without difference of opinion, are determined to fight under the banners of their great leaders, and unitedly too, until they win. Gentlemen, we are now at the commencement of one of those great battles in which the Liberal party have always been triumphant. I believe that the great question which the Liberal party will now have to deal with is the land question in England and Scotland. We have suffered, and are suffering, great evils from the land laws of England, and those evils will have to be remedied. They will be remedied by the Liberal party before very long. In Ireland, the evils of the land system are so acute, so painful, so distressing in every way, and so injurious to the main body of the people, that the disease has taken an acute form, and it is utterly impossible for us to allow the question to rest. Gentlemen, that must necessarily be a question we shall have to deal with. My honourable friend, Mr. McMinnies, has gone over ground with which I entirely sympathise. I feel as he does that the state of Ireland is a disgrace to this country—nay, I say it is not only a disgrace to the British Government, but it is a discredit to us in the eyes of foreign nations. Look at what the Press says in various parts of Europe—see the allusions that are made to the conduct of England towards Ireland. We, the English people, so high and mighty in our universal philanthropy, ready by our great wisdom to set the whole world in order, nay, under the late Government, we were prepared, if need be, to carry fleets and armies to look after the proper management of mankind. How is it, these foreigners say, that we who are such wonderful philanthropists in regard to the management of every other people in the world, are not able to manage our own people at home? I very seldom quote, but I think Burns once said,

O, wad some power the giftie gie us,
To see' oursels as others see us.

Now our cousins across the Atlantic, the descendants of old John Bull—the American people—are looking at us. Positively a member of the House of Legislature, a member of the Committee of Foreign Relations, —a very important position to occupy—acting with the concurrence of that committee, gave notice of a motion which it is expected will be carried by a large majority. I will read it to you that you may see yourselves as others see you. The resolution is this:—“Mr. King, the member for Louisiana, is about to propose the following resolution :

—‘Whereas the United States have observed regretfully the unhappy condition of Ireland, and whereas Her Britannic Majesty’s Government seem unable to fulfil its normal governing duties of affording protection to life and property in Ireland ; therefore it is resolved that the Secretary of State be instructed to inform Her Britannic Majesty’s Government that it is highly expedient reforms should be introduced immediately, tending to the permanent pacification of Ireland, and to be prosecuted in a kindly, considerate, and pacificatory spirit.” Mr. King is a member of the Foreign Relations Committee, whose approbation of the resolution guarantees its adoption by Congress. Suppose that is passed by the Legislature of the United States? You see they don’t recommend us to crush the Irish people by coercion. No, they recommend us to give them reform, good government, happiness, contentment. I was talking to a very distinguished statesman on this Irish question a few weeks ago, and also about the manner in which the position of Ireland must be regarded in foreign countries ; and he said, “Don’t you think it would be a very good thing indeed?”—and you know we have been most anxious for the good government of the Turkish subjects ; for in order to secure their good government, we have sent diplomatic notes to the different Powers of Europe, requesting that they should act in concert—“Don’t you think it would be a very good thing indeed if the Sultan were to send diplomatic notes to each of the powers of Europe, asking for European concert in order to protect the Irish ! There are two modes of dealing with Ireland. One is to do justice and to make the people content. That is the Liberal mode of dealing with Ireland. There is another mode—the Tory mode—and that is coercion. That is the old mode. It has always been the Tory plan, and it has been tried again and again ; again and again it has failed ; and yet now, notwithstanding all these failures, if you will look at all the Tory speeches you will find that they all go in for one thing, and that is that we ought to coerce Ireland, and not do justice to her. My friend Mr. McMinnies has alluded to the Fourth Party in the House of Commons, and to one of the leaders of that party. I quite agree with my hon. friend. I don’t know who is the leader of the Fourth Party, but one of the leaders is Lord Randolph Churchill, who has been to Preston with a view to enlighten the people of Lancashire as to the proper mode of dealing with the Irish question. Mr. Grant Duff calls this Fourth Party “The Mohawks.” Although I differ from them politically—I am on terms of personal friendship with all the Fourth Party—I will say that they have many of the elements of success. They have audacity and ability ; they know what they intend to do, and they are determined to do it. Let me tell you that I have no doubt whatever that although they may have been sneered at as the tail of the Tory party, that tail during the next Session will wag the head, because the tail suits the sort of strong, excited, and violent counsels of the great body of the Tory party. Lord Randolph Churchill made a speech at Preston, and in it he claimed great credit for the late Government in regard to Ireland, and that credit was this : He said that the late Government, before they went out of office, intended to renew the Peace Preservation Act, and to pass other strong measures for the pacification of Ireland, and to keep the Irish

people quiet. But how was it they did not pass the Peace Preservation Act, if they thought it so important, so necessary for the welfare of Ireland? Why did they dissolve Parliament without passing it? I will tell you. I happen to know on the best authority why. I happen to know that the matter was discussed by the members of the late Government, and they came to the conclusion that as they were going to pass stronger measures of coercion for Ireland, they would find it very difficult to do so in the expiring days of a defunct Parliament. They thought they would have a better chance at the beginning of the new Parliament, believing, as they did, that they would have a good working majority. But they reckoned without their host, as you know. But Lord Churchill says they were quite prepared for strong measures; they had got information from all the resident magistrates in Ireland, from all the police, from all the landed magnates, and they were of opinion, he says, that it was impossible to preserve the peace of Ireland without renewing the Peace Preservation Act, and keeping the Irish people down. Yes, these police officers, resident magistrates, and land agents of Ireland believe that bayonets and gaols are infallible remedies for Irish discontent. But Lord Churchill, in his speech, did not say a word about any remedy. He is the son of the Duke of Marlborough, who was the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland under Lord Beaconsfield's Government; but not a word, not a suggestion of any remedy for the evils of Ireland is made. If you go from the Fourth Party to the leaders of the party, and look at the speeches of Sir Stafford Northcote, Lord Salisbury, Lord John Manners, Lord Cranbrook, and all the members of the late Government, you will find that in every case their only cry is that the present Government ought to have put their foot down sooner on Ireland, and ought to have crushed the spirit of dissatisfaction and discontent. But not one of these statesmen have a word to suggest as to the way in which all these evils which afflict Ireland should be removed. We will go, if you please, to some of the less distinguished members of the Tory party. To-day I notice that a meeting was held at West Kensington—a meeting of the West Kensington Conservative Club. At that meeting a letter was read by Lord Claud John Hamilton, the son of the Duke of Abercorn, who was formerly the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland. He is the brother of Lord George Hamilton, who was in the late Government, and he represents Liverpool. I will tell you what Lord Claud says about Ireland. He said that Messrs. Bright, Chamberlain, and Gladstone should be indicted for conspiracy rather than the miserable Land Leaguers, for having contributed by their speeches and action to the murder, bloodshed, and rapine in Ireland, more than the Land Leaguers. There was a Col. Burnaby at the meeting, who is, I believe, the author of the "Ride to Khiva." I do not know which it was, as there are two or three of them. However, the colonel, in the course of his speech, which was received with frequent applause, expressed his belief that certain members of the Government were true Communists. He believed that Lord Hartington and the Duke of Argyll did not leave the Cabinet because Mr. Gladstone would fill up their places with two creatures of his own; but before long all patriotic men who loved their

country would find it impossible to remain in a Government which contained Mr. Joseph Chamberlain. The Government had conspired together to bring about a state of things in Ireland that would enable them to pass a revolutionary Land Bill, which would be a premium on anarchy—a reward for murdering landlords and mutilating cattle. Those were very strong expressions to make use of. But you may say, “These are people of no consequence.” Lord Salisbury himself said they were not desirous of putting down the disturbances, because the effect would be to enable the Government to pass an Irish Land Bill. What I gather from the speeches is that the Tory party, in the struggle about to commence, feeling that they belong in the main to the owners of land, and that they must maintain their rights as landowners, will oppose the Liberal plan with the greatest bitterness and violence. I fully expect that in the House of Commons we shall have from the Tories, and from the Tories in the country, the most violent opposition. Let us look at what is going on in Ireland. You have there an agrarian war, a battle, a great struggle between the two parties. These two parties consist of the landowners and tenants. The Tory party in the House of Lords and in the House of Commons want to do now what they have always done in the past. Whenever there has been any struggle between the landlords and tenants of Ireland, they want to rescue and back up the landlords and crush the tenants. It will be for the Liberals to be determined that what has been done in the past, yes, for generations, by the two houses of landlords of this kingdom in maintaining all the privileges and powers of the Irish landlord, and in crushing every attempt of the Irish tenant to achieve for himself independence, shall be discontinued. It will be the object of the Tories to carry on that system now. What should be our duty in this great struggle between these two great parties? Of whom do these two parties consist? The landlords own all the land in Ireland. There are over 20,000,000 of acres of land in Ireland, and I find one gentleman owns 170,119 acres. Two hundred and ninety-two persons own 6,458,100 acres, or about one-third of the entire island. I can tell you that 740 persons, very much less than the number in this room, at the present moment own 9,612,728 acres, or about one-half the island, and two-thirds of the whole island are owned by 1,942 persons. There are a few thousand more small landowners, and leaseholders, and about 5,000 or 6,000 owners, who, under the Church Act, were farmers who were enabled to buy the land they had been farming. Practically, the landowners of Ireland are under 10,000. What about the tenants? There are 500,000 tenants. There you have 7,000, 8,000, or 9,000 landowners on one side, backed up by all the prestige of generations, with all the laws in their favour, with all the support that a great and powerful party in England could give them. On the other hand you have 500,000 tenant farmers, representing a population of 3,000,000. How are the farmers situated? They are tenants at will. They are occupying their land at the pleasure of the landowner. The landowner can turn them out at pleasure if they don’t satisfy him in regard to rent and other matters; and, as Mr. McMinnies has told you, the facts of being tenants at will is that, by degrees, the landowners, having the power, have raised the rent from year to year, half-a-crown this and five

shillings the next year, until, at length, they have cut so close to the bone that if there is any bad season, and anything which interrupts the full produce of the soil, the tenants are driven into despair and starvation. Mr. McMinnies has also said—and it lies at the root of the Irish land question—that, unlike the landowners of England, the landowners of Ireland do nothing, in the majority of cases, in the improvement of the land. There are cases—multitudes of cases—in which men have been planted upon bogs on the mountain side, upon land not fit for cultivation, and worth nothing an acre; but these men have been so planted, and have paid one shilling per acre rent per year. They have begun to drain the bog and reclaim the land, and gradually they have overcome the sterility of nature, and made the bog show for the vegetation and fruit. Possibly, when they have got so far, the land agent has put 5s., 7s. 6d., or 10s. an acre on the land. Then probably the men, after a lifelong labour, leave the heritage of industry to their sons, who, again, go on reclaiming these waste places of the earth, until probably the value of the land is increased to 15s. and 20s. an acre—all done by themselves. The draining and the fencing are done by themselves, as well as the erection of the farm homesteads and the roof under which their children sleep. The landlord has done nothing, and yet, at the close of two generations, when the land by so much labour has become worth 20s. a year more per acre, instead of 1s., or, perhaps, nothing, he comes in and robs these people of the money they have put into the land, and which is as much their own property as the soil of any landowner can possibly be. That is a strong case. Everywhere the tenants are improving the land, and every additional improvement is made an excuse for raising the rent. I have told you that this large multitude of farmers—500,000—were standing in antagonistic array against a small number of Irish landowners. It is a trades' union, gentlemen, and the farmers of Ireland have struck against the rents. Of course, it is very unpleasant. I can quite sympathise with a number of these landowners that have had the whip hand of the tenants for generations. I can sympathise with these land agents representing as they do some great peer living in England, and owning 50,000 acres of Irish land. I can quite understand that these land agents, to whom previously the tenantry came cringing on the rent day, supplicating him as though he were a god—I can quite understand that now these gentlemen must feel it a horrible outrage when these men are no longer suppliant and grovelling, but stand up like men and say, "We will not pay you this rent, which is an injustice and a robbery." I, for one, side with the tenants and against the landlords. I say I go in for justice. I say I go in for a repeal of laws which have enabled the landlords to work their own will upon the tenantry of Ireland. The cardinal defect of all Irish legislation has been that it did not give protection to the tenant: it was all in the interest of the landlord. I can tell you that landowners in Ireland do not hesitate about using their power. They had the power of eviction. They used it in such a manner that some of those horrible scenes have been written in the minds of the Irish people as with a red hot iron. These evictions were numerous, but there were portions of Ireland where 200, 300, 400, 500, 600, or

700 families, living happily no doubt in the midst of great privations, but still occupying their own houses, and supporting their families, were evicted in one day. The whole population, as it were, was swept away; nay, in 1849, gentlemen, which is only about 30 years ago, 50,000 of these evictions took place in one year. Try to realize what that means. Fifty thousand evictions mean that 250,000 people, men, women, and children, were swept out of their homes in one year. In some cases they were followed: I know what people say. They say, "Oh, they ought to have emigrated." Some did. I can only say as an Englishman, that I should not like the laws of England to be such that, whether I liked or no, I was obliged to emigrate. Some did emigrate; a great many could not do so. There were many cases in which men had their wives and small children to keep, and in many cases they had under their own roof an aged father or mother. These people managed to obtain a subsistence. Probably for years they had been doing something to improve the soil, but they were swept away. Some of the priests and bishops of the Romish Church in Ireland followed these cases, and what did they find? They found that some emigrated, and others hung about, and some of the landlords gave orders to their tenants that they must not allow any of the evicted tenants shelter in their homes. The priests followed the people. Some of them got temporary shelter, but many of them were reduced to the lowest point of starvation and disease before they would go to the Workhouse. Many went there, and also to the hospital; and I have the testimony of one of the bishops who said that within three years 25 per cent. of the people so evicted had gone to their eternal home. Fifty thousand evictions represent 250,000 people. Are you willing to be held responsible for these deeds of wickedness? Will you allow the tenants of Ireland to continue in this position of unfortunate dependence without any hope or prospect of improving their condition, because they know that if they put labour into the soil it will be confiscated by the power of the landlords to raise the rent? Mr. Gladstone, in the Act of 1870, sought, as far as possible, to stop the evictions; but he, unfortunately, did not succeed. To a very great extent the evictions continued, and what Mr. Gladstone's Act did not do was that it did not prevent the landowners gradually raising the rent of the tenants, so in fact by degrees to possess themselves of the fruits of the soil. Mr. McMinnies and myself will go into the House of Commons, and when we have to fight this battle I know very well we shall be met with the cry that we are in favour of confiscation, and the Tories will say that they are maintaining the rights of property. We have heard that cry in the country. We shall hear it in the House of Commons; but the reply is this: "We are opposed to confiscation; we are in favour of the rights of property; but we are opposed to the confiscation of the tenant's interest in the soil. We are prepared to maintain their rights." I say this is going to be a great struggle, and I implore you, as my honourable friend has done, not to allow any misrepresentations or appeals to your passions to becloud your judgment. Remember this. There may be very great violence to be regretted; but how, let me ask you, has it been in times past, and in all ages of the world, when you have a people who have been kept down unjustly

for generations? When they rise against the oppression, do you think they can act with the calm philosophy of one who has no interest at stake? I don't justify violence, but I do say that the Tories have constantly opposed every right claim that has been made by the Irish people. No doubt we shall be asked to protect the landowners from the tenants. How? Of course, if a man commits a crime, if he destroys life, or damages property, he ought to be punished; but what are we to do with Boycotting, gentlemen? I understand something about Boycotting. I will tell you something about it. I remember a case in this borough a number of years ago. I can recollect in my early years the first election for the borough of Warrington. I remember that the Liberals of that time returned a Liberal representative, and a good many shopkeepers in Bridge-street voted for him. But what happened? They were Boycotted, gentlemen. All the country squires and the farmers of Cheshire refused to go into their shops. But this Boycotting answered, and we got very few votes out of Bridge-street afterwards. So it remained for many years; but I am glad to think that with the Ballot people may vote without any fear. I wish you to remember that it is utterly impossible for us to put down a combination of the Irish farmers if they are careful not to commit violence or crime. I do hope that the Irish leaders will be careful, that they will give confidence to the intentions of Her Majesty's present advisers, and seek as far as possible to prevent any breach of the law. It is my wish, and the wish of my hon. friend, that the Government may bring in a thorough bill; that they may not seek by any compromise to weaken its powers; and then I hope they will fight it out to the bitter end. Your representative and myself will do so. I trust that the whole mass of the Liberal party will be determined that they will have this measure of justice, and that they will overcome, as I have no doubt they will overcome, every obstacle and obstruction that may be thrown against them.

No. IV.

Address to the Liberal Electors of Burnley, delivered in the Unitarian School, Trafalgar Street, November 23, 1885.

The chairman has alluded to a very important political transaction, I mean the course which the Irish party under the leadership of Mr. Parnell intend to take at the forthcoming election. Gentlemen, I, as the chairman has said, in the whole course of my life have been identified with the party who have struggled through good and through ill report to give to our Irish fellow-countrymen those measures of justice we thought they were entitled to. I can remember the period when no Irishman could fulfil any public office, when he could not be elected to the British House of Commons, when the entire body of the people of Ireland were held down by a small sect; I mean the Episcopalian Church, which was the established religion of the country, when in every direction political rights and privileges and religious equality were

denounced and obstructed by the Tory party, and now we may say with truth that we found Ireland, politically and religiously, in slavery, and we, the Liberal party, have given them freedom. We gave them the great measure of Catholic Emancipation, we gave them the great measure of the disestablishment of the Irish Church, we have conferred upon them that enormous boon of the Irish Land Act, which, as my friend the chairman has told you, gives to the farmers in Ireland the restitution of a very large sum of money by the reduction of the rents of their farms, and in connection with that they were given security for their industry and for their capital. We gave them finally that great measure, which has enabled the Irish people to express in a manner which has never yet been the case, the national purpose and will of that country. And when the Liberal party have done all that, what are the words of Mr. Parnell, as contained in his manifesto? I won't quote the language to which the chairman has alluded—the vituperative language Mr. Parnell has heaped upon the Liberal party—but I will quote two passages in the speech which he delivered yesterday at Liverpool. He said: “I do not care what measures the Liberal party have passed.” Does not care what measures they passed! He does not care, he has no regard whatever to the conduct of the Liberal party as compared with that of the Tory party. I recollect that in every step we have made in this progress towards fairness and justice to the Irish people, we have been bitterly opposed by the Tory party. To the Catholic Emancipation Bill they were bitterly opposed. In every measure we have attempted to carry in the House of Commons since I was a member, even in connection with the very smallest of measures, I have frequently with other Liberals voted with the Irish party, and we have always been opposed by the great body of the Tory party in the House. But Mr. Parnell does not care for these measures. He goes further and gives this advice. He says: “I ask you to disregard every personal and local consideration, except the one that it is our duty to weaken the Liberal party at the present moment.” I want you gentlemen to understand the meaning of that. I trust that amongst your friends in the different wards in this town there may be this recollection of the fact that Mr. Parnell's policy now is to weaken the Liberal party as far as possible. Why does he want to weaken the Liberal party? Why has this manifesto been delayed so long? Because those gentlemen who formed the Executive Committee of the Irish party wish to see how they can best make use of their power with a view to the promotion of the objects that they have at heart. They have found that the Liberal party is likely to gain success in various directions, and because of that they wish to weaken it. They wish to be placed in this position that when Parliament meets the Liberal party will have only a comparatively small majority over the Tory party, and then by their union with the Tory party they may be able to control the legislation which may be carried forward by the Liberals. Gentlemen, are Englishmen to allow Mr. Parnell by this policy to become the arbiter of the destinies of this country? Is it to be tolerated for a moment? Is it to be tolerated that a policy should be inaugurated, not upon principle, but simply with a view to enable him to impose his will upon the British House of

Commons, because by weakening the Liberal party and by trafficking with the Tory party he believes he would be able to control the action of the Liberals. What would happen? We all have a deep interest in Liberal legislation. We believe the land question is pressing for solution. We believe by a reform of the land laws we could do very much to extend the interests of agriculture and to improve home trade, and to benefit every man in Burnley by improving the industry and prosperity of the country. Gentlemen, are we to be prevented from passing measures in the interests of the great body of the English people because Mr. Parnell chooses to say, "I consider that the Liberal party should not have any support, and I will do everything in my power in Parliament to prevent any Liberal legislation unless I get the measures which I demand." There is not only the question of the land, but you have the question to which the chairman has alluded, the most important question of trade. I can tell you that every day convinces me more and more that there is a conspiracy amongst a large number of people, with a view to put back trade in this country in the interests of the land owners. Are we to be frustrated, are our interests to be made a sport of, simply because Mr. Parnell chooses to insist upon becoming the arbiter of the destinies of our country? Gentlemen, I want you to carry into every part of the town the idea that it has become absolutely essential in the interests of the great measures of the Liberal party of the future, and in order to protect the trade and industry of the country, it is necessary that everyone should vote for the representatives of Liberal principles. You should also seek to show, by a large majority, that, in Burnley at least, you will not allow the Irish party to carry out their intentions. I do not know what the Tories intend to do, but I can tell Mr. Parnell this, that if I in my own interests had to choose between those people who had always been anxious to do justice as far as possible towards me, and those who for generations had always been opposed to my interests, I should deem it a mistake to trust to those who had always been opposed to me, and neglect those who had been for me. I have seen Lord Randolph Churchill trafficking again and again with the leaders of the Irish party. I have known, on one or two recent occasions, when there seemed to be a very narrow chance of the Liberal party being defeated, the Irish party, up to the last, stand aside in such a way that none in the House knew how they intended to vote, and I remember on one occasion asking two respectable Irish Home Rule members how they were going to vote. "Well," they said, "there is a negotiation going on, and it depends upon the terms whether we shall vote on one side or the other." They made terms on the expectation that by weakening the Liberal party they might get control of the action of the House of Commons. If the Tory Government can only remain in power by virtue of the Irish vote they expect they will be able not only to prevent Liberal legislation, but control the action of the Liberal party. One or two courses must be taken. One is, the Tory party will deceive the Irish party, and when the time comes will not be able to carry those measures which Mr. Parnell expects from them, because I think it is not improbable that if it is seen in this country clearly that the Tory party are being maintained in office by a policy

repugnant to the minds of a good many supporters, and simply by virtue of Mr. Parnell's influence, I think they may have some difficulty with their own side. But the most dangerous thing is that by yielding to that trickster kind of policy which some of the Tory party are prepared to pursue in order to maintain their position in the Government, they may go much further than either you or I may desire. Let me tell you that in regard to the land question landowners will strain every nerve to prevent the reform of the land laws. They want to maintain in the position of supremacy and power, in their own interests, the present system by which they gain a great advantage. They want to continue the political authority of the large estates of the country, and they will fight to the death, and if they could, by trafficking with Mr. Parnell—if they could do something which would secure possibly some protection to the agricultural interests, I don't hesitate to say that, in my judgment, there are members of that party, men of great influence, who would enter into such a compact, and the result might be some measures which possibly the English people would disapprove of. I said when I first came among you that although I had always been in favour of Irish liberty, I would not be a party to establish a separate legislature for Ireland, which I think would be a danger to this country and a serious injury to the Irish nation. I may lose every Irish vote in Burnley because of that, but I thank you, gentlemen, and the other Liberals of Burnley, that I at least feel that I am independent of the Irish vote. The Tory party has said, and they are hoping, that this defection of the Irish may diminish the majority with which I shall be elected as member of this borough. They are anxious to diminish it, but I appeal to you to be determined to make increasing efforts so that we may, despite the Irish defection, still increase our majority. I cannot help hoping and believing that there are gentlemen who otherwise might be disposed to support the Tory candidate, who may, in the present serious state of affairs, think it undesirable to fall into the trap and not aid in weakening the Liberal party; and if it happens, as it may happen, with the defection of the Irish party, that in Lancashire some seats will be lost, I have that great confidence in the general judgment and political principles of the English people to believe that the result of this election, which will, to a large extent, determine the future destinies of this country, will be that the power will not pass out of the hands of our great leader into the dangerous hands of Lord Salisbury, Lord Randolph Churchill, and Mr. Parnell—a relic of the old days of protective and prohibitory duties. I have referred to the fact that I think it might very well happen that the Tory party, in view of the desire they have to improve the position of the farmer, may be inclined to revert, at all events to some extent, to the old trade policy which interfered so much with the welfare of this country. Just before coming from the Thorn Hotel I was waited upon by an old man who impressed me greatly with the idea that he was one of nature's gentlemen. He was a working man, and his name was Whalley, a shoemaker. He came to make me a present, and he did make me a present, and it was this loaf. [Showing a small loaf which would have been made of about three or four ounces of flour, and which had been baked in a fourpenny loaf-tin of the olden times, and was,

therefore, a representation, so far as size went, but not quality, by any means, of the days of protection.] This was a fourpenny loaf when he was a boy. It seems that his father was an intelligent sort of man, and had preserved for the instruction of the future generations one of the tins in which he used to have his fourpenny loaves baked. This is the loaf, and a better loaf in quality than any likely to be sold in those days. But the old man told me something else. He said a shoemaker had to work in those days very hard and very long hours to be able to make five pairs of shoes, and he got for these shoes 2s. 6d. per pair, and at the end of the week got 12s. 6d. as his wage. If he wanted a peck of flour weighing 30lbs., he had to give 15s. for it—2s. 6d. more than his week's earnings. The old man went on to say they were now getting 5s. a pair for making shoes, and the present price of a peck of flour was 2s. 10½d., and instead of 12s. 6d. per week they got 25s. Gentlemen, he also mentioned the price of sugar, tea, coffee, and other things, all of which was quite true. Now he could buy much better sugar at a very much less price than he could when a lad. In fact, it is now shown by the returns we have recorded, that in consequence of the low price of flour, sugar, and other commodities, the consumption per head of the population is very much greater than it was some years ago. You know, gentlemen, fifty years ago, when there was a very high duty upon all these commodities, and when corn and flour, &c., were very high, and when people had to live on short earnings; when we told the Tories that the people could eat a great deal more if they had it, they said the people were very well off, and if we reduced the price of these commodities their wages would fall, and therefore they would not be able to buy any more. We found it out. We know now perfectly well that men do live a great deal better than they did at one time. What is the consequence? We are now importing a value of food which is really astonishing. In the days I speak of there was scarcely any food imported at all. Last year we imported £133,810,000 worth of food. The people who benefit by this are not the middle and higher classes, but are the great body of the working classes of this country. I will tell you another thing with regard to bringing an enormous amount of food from other countries. My friend the chairman has alluded to a placard which stated something about vessels coming to this country laden with produce. A very good thing too, gentlemen. These vessels are English vessels. They belong to the English people, who, because of our free trade system, are able to make them cheaper than any other people in the world. Here is America, that great country across the Atlantic, where they are so idiotic, that by putting on those duties—they put duties upon iron and other commodities—they cannot make iron ships to compete with England, consequently the great carrying trade between America and this country is done by British ships and British seamen. I suppose nobody could persuade you that the people of these different countries were so kind and so benevolent, and so desirous of making English people comfortable, that they make us a present of this £133,000,000. They do not, and I have never seen that they are disposed to act differently than a man behind the counter in Burnley would do towards a customer. They expect to get some little

advantage out of the trade. We buy the goods and we have to pay for them (Mr. Rylands here proceeded to show, as he has done several times before, how imported goods were paid for). Continuing, he said : You know that some of these Tories say that because America and other countries have protective duties upon cloth, iron, &c., we ought to retaliate by putting a duty upon several articles coming from these countries. When Lord Salisbury and his colleagues talk about restrictive duties they ought to tell us what the article is they are going to put the duty on. They would not put a duty on goods from America. You would not stand it, for the produce from that country consists chiefly of articles you eat. If you paid sufficient duty (pointing to the small loaf) you would come back to this. America sends us a large quantity of cotton, for we cannot grow cotton here, though, mark you, if this protective system was to be carried out we ought to cover over a great number of fields, many acres of land, with glass, have it heated with hot water, and grow cotton ourselves. This would cost from 2s. 6d. to 5s., whereas we can purchase the same and bring it from America at a cost of about 6d. The effect of such a policy would be to destroy the cotton trade, and in point of fact nobody would be so idiotic as to propose any duty on raw materials which are necessary for our manufacturers. These raw materials are really a large amount of what we import. Last year we imported a total of raw materials of £119,000,000. If they taxed raw materials coming into this country they would kill the goose that lays the golden egg. If you had to pay a considerable sum extra for raw materials you would not be able to sell in such a way as to be able to meet the competition of other parts of the world. We import a good deal of wine, spirits, tobacco, cocoa, coffee, and tea, and these come to £28,500,000 a year. We still get out of tea £10,500,000. The present Chancellor of the Exchequer wanted to put another screw upon that in order that he might raise additional taxation. Every penny you put upon tea lessens the consumption of tea in this country, and lessens the industry which goes to pay for the tea ; and, just as I told you about the other articles, since we reduced the duty on tea the amount of consumption has increased, and many people now enjoy a cup of tea, who in former days could not have it. The people who drank tea when I was a boy, ran no risk of having their nerves disturbed by the strength of it, I can tell you. After it began to be cheap everybody began to enjoy it, and the consumption increased and increased, and the trade which existed between this country and China and India increased in consequence of this consumption. I am sorry to say there is still 6d. a pound on tea, and that when you put 6d. on tea the customer who buys it over the counter pays a great deal more than a sixpenny duty, because all the dealers, when charging their profit, charge also a profit upon the transaction, and if it is increased 6d., they put a little extra profit upon that as well as upon the original cost of the tea. I believe this duty of 6d. takes out of the pockets of the people 9d. I think, instead of putting an extra duty on tea, we ought to abolish the tea duty, and then we should have a much larger consumption and a stimulus to industry. I would do away with the duty on coffee, cocoa, and other things. I would have a free breakfast table, and that would be, I think,

a great boon to the great body of the people of this country. We may say as regards retaliative duties, we are not going to put extra duty on tea and coffee, and I should be sorry to renew the duty upon sugar. Sugar is an article which my friend the shoemaker said they used to pay 8d. and 9d. per lb. for, and for very coarse sugar, too ; so coarse, indeed, that if they had had a microscope in those days and looked at that sugar they would have found beetles in it. Now you can get it at a very moderate price, we are eating a great deal more, and it is a very wholesome article of diet for people who are not over fat. But how is it we have free sugar, gentlemen ? Mr. Gladstone, in his first Government, reduced the duty on sugar considerably, and when he went out of office in 1874 he left a considerable surplus. The balance was in favour of the country something like £6,000,000, and out of this the Tories repealed the remaining duty upon sugar. As regards tobacco, gentlemen. I am a smoker. I like my pipe, and I should not like to pay any more for tobacco. I think we pay enough. I have often thought if we could collect the tobacco duty in a different way it would do a power of good. I would have all tobacco sold at the price it actually cost without duty. When you asked for an ounce you would require probably three farthings. To get the duty I would have a lot of fellows say in blue coats with red collars to collect it. When you paid the three farthings these fellows could step in and ask for 2½d. for the Government. If you saw, when buying tobacco, how much was for the Government and how much for the article, you would begin to ask yourself whether the money was properly expended. We are paying a good deal, but do we get our money's worth ? I believe that if it were carefully investigated by you as it has been by me, you would come to the conclusion that in every department of Government you do not get your money's worth for your money. No, gentlemen, but there are a good many people who do get a great deal out of your money, men who are in the army, navy, and civil service. Remember those great families whose names are associated with the great territorial interests of the country ; the lords, the landowners, etc., and you will find that their sons, brothers, cousins, and relatives generally are being continually saddled upon the public purse. Again, there are wine and spirits, and I don't suppose that anybody would suggest that there should be any extra taxation or duties put upon these articles. Well now, the truth is, after going through all these different articles, you find that in the whole of our imports last year, there was only £50,000,000 worth of manufactured articles. Where is the chance of retaliation ? How can you retaliate ? Speaking at Stockport, which you know is a great place for the manufacture of hats, a Tory candidate began to talk about French silk. He said French silk was brought into this country, in competition with our silk manufacturers, therefore we ought to put a protective duty upon it. It so happens that at Stockport they require a lot of French silk for the purpose of making the linings of the hats they manufacture, so one of those hat makers, when he heard the Tory candidate, said, " But we want French silk for the trimming of our hats." What did the Tory candidate say ? He said, " Oh, then we will put it upon something else. Well, I say they cannot put it upon anything else, and even now

we are doing better than other countries. We are progressing in our silk manufactures far better than France. We are in a better position than either Germany, Belgium, or America. I may mention the fact that during the last 20 years our exports to India have increased from £16,500,000 to £30,000,000, and we have in consequence done an increasing trade with that country, and you, gentlemen, who are engaged in the Burnley cotton trade, no doubt have the deepest possible interest in the improvement of the Indian trade, because India takes a considerable amount of the produce of the cotton looms of this kingdom. With regard to India, the Liberal policy is different to the Tory policy, and the Liberal policy is calculated to improve the condition and extend the welfare of the 250 millions of our subjects in that empire, while the Tory policy has been altogether the contrary. The liberal policy was to extend the liberties of the Hindoos, and employ them in the administration of their own affairs, which would have the effect of diminishing the cost of the Government of India, and of increasing the attachment of the Indian people to the British race. We ought to do everything in our power to increase and improve the well-being of the Hindoos, for as soon as one of these Hindoo peasants is able to get a little more money he will become a customer of the looms in Burnley, and in many other parts of England. Gentlemen, that is the policy of the Liberal party, and that is a policy altogether opposed to the Tory policy, which is a policy for the benefit of the few at the expense of the many. A short time ago it was proposed that a number of eminently qualified Hindoos should be appointed to the judicial bench. The Tories opposed it, and did everything to embarrass Lord Ripon's Government, and prevent the adoption of this reform. You will see from all I have said that I believe the Liberal party in the past have conferred upon this country untold blessings, and I believe they have in view great measures which will further advance the prosperity of the people, and I trust by your assistance and co-operation that I may, notwithstanding the Irish defection, find on Saturday night that I am again the member for Burnley by a larger majority than before.

No. V.

Address to the Burnley Liberal Council in explanation of his vote on the second reading of the Government of Ireland Bill, June 12, 1886.

Mr. Chairman and gentlemen,—Let me say, in the first place, that I am deeply grateful to the Executive of the Borough of Burnley, also to the Liberal Council, for the very courteous and for the very kind manner in which they have acted towards me during the last few weeks, in which I have been placed in a most responsible and in a most painful position. I have received during that time a large number of letters from Burnley, many from gentlemen who were good enough to write to me to say they approved of the course I was taking, and I have received other letters from other gentlemen who wrote to say they differed from

me in the course I was taking, but in all those letters there was an universal expression of sympathy in regard to the difficult position in which I found myself placed. I thank all those gentlemen who communicated with me, and I thank you all, gentlemen, for the kind, considerate, and courteous manner in which you have received me this evening, though I, unfortunately, know that there are probably many among you who do not agree with me in the course I have taken. At the same time, perhaps, I may be allowed to say that I think I had some claim upon the consideration of the Liberals of Burnley. I have been connected with Burnley for nearly eleven years, and during that time I have stinted neither money, nor time, nor brain-work in your service. The money is the least matter, but I have spent, in promoting the Liberal interests of Burnley, nearly £6,000 since I became your member. That is, I say, the least matter, and I declare to you that while I have been member for Burnley I have no thought of any personal interest, but have devoted myself heart and soul to my constituency, and I stand here to challenge anyone to deny it. Gentlemen, when I was elected last November I was elected upon a broad platform—I was elected upon the broad platform of Mr. Gladstone's authorised programme as declared in Midlothian. Don't you remember that I said I would not take to any unauthorised programme? Don't you remember that in two or three speeches I said there were some questions which should be postponed, but that I was willing to follow the lead of Mr. Gladstone, and I thought the four great questions he proposed for the consideration of the new Parliament embraced matters that were of so much importance that they would give useful work to Parliament for some years to come. I went to support the programme which he put before the country, and I believe that in that matter I was fairly your representative. I knew you wished me to support the programme of Mr. Gladstone; I knew you had great confidence in Mr. Gladstone; I knew, also, that you were aware that in the main throughout several years of Parliamentary life I had given a constant and loyal support to Mr. Gladstone, support so loyal, gentlemen, that on several critical occasions I sacrificed my own opinions, publicly expressed, in order to support Mr. Gladstone's Government. Let me mention two or three cases. Let me remind you of the Coercion Act of 1881, an Act by which the Government of that day were enabled to put men into prison without trial, and they did put thousands of men into prison without trial. Didn't I get up in the House of Commons and protest against that—didn't I denounce it? And what happened, gentlemen? I had a number of letters from Burnley, from friends of mine, who said, "Don't go against Mr. Gladstone." I sacrificed my opinion. I voted for the measure because it was proposed by Mr. Gladstone, though, at the same time, I believed it to be a mistake. I told members of the Government privately that I thought they were taking a course that would inevitably lead to disaster, and increase the difficulties of the Irish question, but I was assured by Mr. Forster, the Attorney-General, the Solicitor-General, and others, that the course it was proposed to take would never be put into operation, because as soon as the village ruffians knew the Government had that power they would all make off to America. I yielded, and I voted for the Coercion Act, and that Act, I be-

lieve, did a great deal to inflame the passions of the Irish people, and I believe it has had very much to do with the unfortunate state of things which has obtained since that period ; but I voted for it because I was anxious to give Mr. Gladstone support. There was the case of Egypt. Don't you know, gentlemen, that I got up in the House of Commons and denounced as a crime of grave atrocity the bombardment of Alexandria ; that I denounced the destruction of 10,000 Arabs struggling, as Mr. Gladstone said, struggling to be free, and rightly struggling to be free. Gentlemen, I have said that the conduct of the authorities of this country in the bombardment of Alexandria, and in staining the hands of England with the innocent blood of these men, was unjustifiable. These men were innocent, though savages, and they brought their naked bodies against our soldiers with their rifles, and they were shot down by thousands, these men who were struggling, and rightly struggling, to be free. I protested against it in the House of Commons ; but when it came to a vote of censure on the Government what did I do ? When the Government might have been turned out of office because they had been guilty of what I believed to be an unjustifiable policy ; when Mr. Bright left them on that ground, I voted for the Government in order to maintain Mr. Gladstone in office. I had a difficulty in justifying that vote ; still, let it be taken to show that I have been anxious to give to the illustrious leader of our great party the greatest possible support I could. There is another case—in the year 1883—and I have more reason to give this than the others, because it has been alluded to recently. I don't know whether my friend Mr. Littlehales is present or not. I see that at a meeting in Fulledge he made this remark : the Rev. R. Littlehales, alluding to an observation by Mr. Watson to the effect that Mr. Rylands had represented Burnley for ten years without complaint, said that was not correct. “ Mr. Rylands, two or three years ago, by bringing in an amendment in regard to the national debt, which the Tories had intimated their intention of taking advantage of in order to defeat the Government,” etc. Now, what was that national debt question which Mr. Littlehales says I was guilty some way or other in bringing forward ? Well, in 1883, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. Childers, brought forward a measure the object of which was this : For twenty to thirty years the taxpayers of this country had been paying a considerable sum every year in excess of the charges necessary to be borne by them in order to pay off the national debt annuities, so that in 1885 there would be a dropping-in of those annuities that would save the country six millions a year. That is to say, that owing to these payments being made out of your taxes—out of the various things you consume, as well as the general taxes of the country,—these payments which had been made by this generation, and by our immediate predecessors, had provided for a great relief to the country by the settlement of these annuities, and practically relieving the country to the extent of six millions. Now, what is the crime I am charged with ? I thought this six millions a year, having been so accumulated out of the taxes of the country from the taxpayers of this generation, ought to be given to this generation. I gave notice of motion the object of which was that this six millions a year should be made use of to do away with the duty on tea, coffee,

currants, raisins—in fact to give the working classes of this country a free breakfast table. More than that, we could not import tea cheaper—take sixpence a pound off the duty upon tea—without reducing the price, and the reduction in price would tend to the increase of the consumption, and to an increase in the consumption of sugar, because everybody who uses tea uses sugar with it. We calculated, that we should import, in consequence of this change, at least four to five million pounds' worth more of tea and sugar a year. How would you have to pay for it? With calicoes. Consequently it would improve your trade, and increase the demand for labour in Burnley, so that while you had cheaper tea, coffee, currants, and dried fruits of that description, you actually would have better trade. Well, I thought that was not a bad thing to do for Burnley, and I gave notice of this motion. What did the Chancellor of the Exchequer want to do? He wanted to make use of the falling in of the annuities to pay off a lot of other debts to relieve people living in twenty-five years' time. I said this was not fair, and as we had been paying for the annuities I would have the advantage of them. The Chancellor of the Exchequer said, "Let us reduce the National Debt, how can we do that?" I said, "I will tell you how to do that. Reduce the gross and extravagant expenditure of the country. Charge real property with a tax equal to the tax upon personal property." What happens? It was perfectly true, as Mr. Littlehales had said, that the Tories intimated that they would support the motion, and at that time they and the Irish were quite ready to embarrass the Liberal Government. Mr. Childers, a great friend of mine, had an interview with me. We discussed the whole thing over, and he said, "As a friend, I hope you won't press this thing any further, because if you do it may probably be very embarrassing to the Government owing to the combination of opponents." Well, gentlemen, again—here I stand in a white sheet to confess—I gave up what I believed to be in the interests of my constituents, and I withdrew my motion. I never made a speech in the House of Commons about it. The conversations I had with Mr. Childers were of a private character. I withdrew my motion in order to save the Government a difficulty. I saw the Government were wrong, and that I was right, and they ought to have done what I asked them to do; but they refused, and, of course, I had to consider whether it was right to embarrass Mr. Gladstone's Government and get them defeated on a serious question. Although I was of opinion the Government were wrong and I was right I submitted to the interests of my party, and I didn't press the resolution, so that I don't think that is an action upon which there should be any complaint made. On all those various questions with which I have agreed with Mr. Gladstone, ever since Mr. Gladstone took the lead of the Liberal party, I have given him steady and loyal support, and in all great questions in which the Liberal party have been identified, I have been actively engaged in promoting them. Now I think it is rather—must I say unreasonable?—is it not a little harsh that a man who for so many years has served Burnley, served his party upon all questions with great anxiety to be faithful in his duty; is it not rather hard that because we differ upon one question a number of gentlemen should get up and

say, "We blot out everything you have done for us, and because you cannot see with us upon this one question we will get rid of you?" Don't you think it hard? I think it is a little hard. Let me just point out that in taking the line I am taking—which I admit does not accord with the views of a number of my friends, and which on that account I have taken with great pain—I would not have you suppose I have separated even for a time from Mr. Gladstone, or in any way gone contrary to the wishes of a number of my friends in Burnley, without great pain and anxiety. Why, gentlemen, I value your good feeling so much, that short of the absolute crushing of a feeling of conscientious duty, I would do anything to retain your favour; but I cannot risk my conscience for that. The course I have taken—whether I am right or wrong—is a course that a great many Radicals and Liberals have taken all along. I may give you the name of my illustrious friend John Bright—John Bright, who is above all suspicion, a man who has long been a supporter of every means of elevating the people,—who has always voted against class interest. (A voice: "No, no," he voted against—Interruption and cries of "Order.") I must say my friend Mr. Riley consoles me; I thought I was the only Radical he thought it necessary to vituperate. John Bright; I may mention Radical statesmen—I may mention my friend Mr. Chamberlain, I may mention Mr. Trevelyan, also my friend Mr. W. E. Baxter, a former member for Montrose, who sat in Parliament for eight years,—one of the most Radical and useful members in the House. I may mention also the name of Lord Hartington, Lord Derby, Mr. Goschen, the Duke of Argyle. You must bear in mind that these are gentlemen who have in the past assisted and done a great deal of good work for the Liberal cause. I must say, with regard to Lord Hartington, on former occasions I thought he was not prepared to go so far as some Radicals and myself desired, but I will say this, that although he is not a Radical like myself, he is a man of the highest political reputation. He is a man of a most conscientious political opinion, and I remember at the time when Mr. Gladstone retired from the leadership—temporarily—of the party, Lord Hartington acted as leader. I was one of his followers, and though sometimes disappointed and inclined to urge him on, still I must say he conducted the opposition in the House of Commons with very great ability. It is not only eminent statesmen who have spoken against the Bill, but I may give you the names of eminent dissenting divines, men like the Rev. W. Arthur, Mr. Spurgeon, Mr. Dale, of Birmingham, some of the leading Presbyterian clergymen of Scotland belonging to the United Presbyterian Churches—men whose opinions we cannot ignore without disrespect. I may give you the names of eminent Liberal authors who have expressed themselves as altogether opposed to these proposals or similar proposals. Amongst others there are John Stuart Mill, the late Henry Fawcett—who was a good Radical, a distinguished member of Parliament, and an eminent Liberal author—Goldwin Smith, Matthew Arnold, Tyndall, Huxley, Froude—men of the highest intellect. Just look round in this district at the different boroughs and the county divisions which were contested at the last election, and see what the members and what the candidates think about this matter. Now I am

going to mention, first of all, a gentleman who was a Liberal member of the last Parliament, and who was a candidate at the last election—I allude to Mr. Phillips, member for Bury—a man who has given thousands and thousands to the Liberal cause throughout Lancashire, and devoted himself time after time, and spared no effort in promoting the Radical interest. Well, he has gone against this Bill: I was in conversation with him the other day and found he was altogether opposed to the Bill; yet none can say he is interested except it is for the good of the country. Mr. Grafton, Mr. Potter (candidate for Darwen), Mr. Briggs (candidate for Blackburn, formerly member for Blackburn), Mr. Mc.Coan (candidate for Lancaster), Mr. T. W. Russell—an eloquent man in the temperance cause, who, I believe, came to Burnley whilst I was making my canvass—all have gone against this Bill. (A voice: “Gladstone’s worth them all!” and loud and prolonged applause.) I believe Mr. Gladstone towers above all the rest; but I suppose the gentleman who made that remark does not wish the Government of this country to be a sort of autocracy. What I want to impress on you is this, the question is so important that it really affects the interests of everyone in such a great degree that I think we ought to avoid as far as possible any personalities. I hope after the meeting to have an opportunity of listening to your objections, and I shall listen with satisfaction to any arguments which may be put forward against the views which I hold on this question. Now, I find that there is a charge made against me by Mr. Riley, and I was astonished when I saw this charge, to find that it was a charge of inconsistency. On this question I think, whatever else might be said with regard to my being right or wrong, I may lay claim to being consistent. Mr. Riley says that at a meeting in Burnley at the last election I said that for forty years I had been an ardent supporter of the claims of Ireland, and would give Ireland every possible control of local affairs, but would not vote for or support an independent Parliament for Ireland. That is what I say. I repeat that for forty years I have been a friend of every measure that would promote justice to Ireland and extend to that country the local control of public affairs; but Mr. Riley goes on to say that in every speech and act I have been in direct opposition to that pledge. I may ask what speeches have I made since I went into Parliament last November, opposed to the pledge, or contrary to the opinion that I expressed then, that I was in favour of giving Ireland every possible control over her own local affairs? (A voice: “Opera House.”) My speech at the Opera House was directed to one point only, and that was the proposal to establish a separate and independent Parliament in Ireland, which would endanger the interests of this country. You may differ from that opinion; that was my speech. I have said nothing that has been inconsistent with my belief that we ought, if possible, to extend local self-government to Ireland. In this session of Parliament there have been several bills brought in by Irish members to improve and extend their local government, such as Boards of Guardians, Town Councils, Local Boards, etc., and I have voted for every one of them. Mr. Riley did not know it. (Mr. Riley: I said in your

speeches and in your vote.) I am sure Mr. Riley did not wish intentionally to misrepresent me. (Mr. Riley: I can prove it.) He could not know about these acts. I had actually voted for bills to extend local self-government to Ireland. Now, I will tell you another thing. There was a proposed compromise. Well now, I was approached some two or three weeks ago by a most distinguished member of the House of Commons who came to me to see—at the request of the Government no doubt—whether some mode of compromise could not be arrived at that would prevent the unfortunate disagreement in the Liberal party. Well, I had a conversation with this member of the House of Commons, and knowing the opinions of a number of Radical members on the matter, I said to him that I felt sure if Mr. Gladstone would withdraw the Bill and in lieu of it propose a resolution—I suggested a resolution in Mr. Gladstone's own words—in favour of a great measure of local government being given to Ireland, or local autonomy if it was thought better, subject to the three conditions Mr. Gladstone laid down, namely, the maintenance of the unity of the kingdom, the supremacy of Parliament, and the protection of minorities, and my distinguished friend, a supporter of the Bill, said, "Well, it is perfectly right. I think those words will do very well. They are Mr. Gladstone's own words, but this confounded Bill does not carry out any of the three conditions. That was a man who voted for the Bill. (A Voice: "Name.") Well, I won't tell you. (General commotion.) I won't mention the name in public. What I mention that for is to show that at the time it was being represented in Burnley that I was opposed to any measure of self-government for Ireland I was actively engaged in trying to get a resolution adopted which was recognised in the House of Commons, and I have reason to believe that Parliament would have adopted it had not an unfortunate circumstance put a stop to the negotiations. I must just for a few moments mention another statement. I was charged with having attacked the secret service vote for the first time for sixteen years, and after having in that way attacked the Government I wanted to withdraw the resolution, and my friend, Mr. Riley—(Mr. Riley: I didn't say so.) At all events the complaint was that I had brought forward this attack on the secret service fund and then wanted to withdraw the resolution, and that I had never attacked the secret service fund for sixteen years. Now, gentlemen, I shall never, I hope, need to trouble you again with replies to charges of this kind, but I want to show you that I do hope that, while I may be attacked upon the principles of the argument we have upon this great question, you will not listen to these cock-and-bull stories. I went to Hansard when I saw this statement, I turned to the debates to see what I had done. Well, gentlemen, I say, in reply to this charge, mind you, in 1870 I divided the House against the Secret Service vote in favour of a considerable reduction. In 1871 I brought the question of the secret service up, by questions and speeches, before the House of Commons, no less than seven times, and I compelled the Government to acknowledge that they were paying illegally and improperly sums of money which ought to be put to the vote. Mr. Gladstone knew nothing about it. He sent for me personally. I put the question to

him, and he announced that the salaries in question should no longer be paid on secret service, but placed on the estimates as they ought to be. The result was that we were able to vote upon them, and they have been considerably reduced since then. In 1872 and 1873, in each session I brought the subject forward, and moved a reduction of the vote. In 1874 and 1875 I was out of Parliament. In 1877 and 1879, I again opposed the vote, and again proposed a resolution for the reduction and against the principle of the secret service fund. In the Parliament of 1880 to 1885 I did not raise the question of secret service votes. Why not? The secret service fund very much increased. Why didn't I resist it? Why, the reason is, we knew that in Ireland there was such an amount of outrage going on that it required all the efforts of the Government, by all the information they could obtain, to check it; also to check the destroying of life and property in London and other parts, and the Government believed it was necessary to employ secret service money to obtain the necessary information to convict the offenders, and to prevent the commission of these crimes. I thought I could not take the responsibility, under the dreadful circumstances of these years, to raise this question of secret service in the House, although I have all along had a great dislike to secret service of any kind if it can possibly be avoided. However, the other day I did bring the matter before the House of Commons, and I did it for a special purpose. Not to attack the Government. There was no attacking the Government. Mr. Gladstone said he knew no more about the disposal of secret service money than a child unborn. It is the Secretaries of State of every department, and the permanent Under-Secretaries, who deal with the expenditure. What I brought the matter forward for was to secure that the secret service voucher should be submitted to the Comptroller and Auditor-General of the House of Commons, a public official who is appointed by the House to see that the public money is properly expended. It was at his request, made at a consultation which had taken place weeks before. It was in consequence of that consultation that I brought the matter under the notice of the House of Commons. I said I would do it on the first occasion the Secret Service vote came forward. It seems I am to be blamed because I wanted to withdraw the motion. (Mr. Riley: "No, no.") I won't dispute, but I understand that was what he meant in his speech. But I will assume that somebody thought I had no right to withdraw this motion. What was the reason? I will tell you. Mr. Gladstone got up in the House of Commons and said he would enquire into the whole matter, also that he knew no more about it than a babe unborn, but he would take care that the whole thing should be investigated, and in the future would take the steps which might be necessary for any change or reform. Supposing I had refused to withdraw the motion after the Prime Minister had made such a satisfactory statement, and tried to force the House to a division when I got everything I wanted in a promise from the Prime Minister? Don't you think it would have been treating him with discourtesy? When I wished to withdraw the motion the Irish members objected to it, and they lost the time of the House to the extent of twenty or twenty-five minutes for

no purpose whatever, because after what had occurred it was not at all necessary that there should be a division. I come to another point. I alluded to the attendance at the Opera House. Let me say, with regard to that Opera House meeting, that it was what I call a tactical mistake. I must say that I did not anticipate that my presence would hurt the minds of a number of my friends, but when it is said that before I went I knew it was a Tory meeting and that it was originated at a Tory Orange Lodge, I say that statement is absolutely false. (Mr. Riley : I will give my authority.) I don't care for any authority ; these gentlemen [turning to those on the platform] will take my word in the matter when I tell them I was waited upon by Liberal members, and asked to attend the meeting. I was told that I would have to support a resolution moved by Lord Hartington ; that a Liberal—Earl Cowper—was to be in the chair ; and that the main business was to be carried out by the Liberals. I went without the slightest idea that it was a Tory meeting. I did not even know it was a Loyal and Patriotic Union meeting. When I was waited upon it was never mentioned that it was a meeting other than a meeting called by a number of Liberals with a view to protesting against the Home Rule proposals. (A voice : Mr. Chairman, will you allow me to ask a question ?) Questions can be asked at the close of my address. I understand that there is a report to the effect, and I understand, also, that it was said at the Fulledge meeting, that Lord Hartington said to me at the meeting, “ Mr. Rylands, we are in the wrong place,” and that I replied, “ Yes, I know it.” Now, that is altogether an inaccurate and unfounded statement. What Lord Hartington stated, after being in the meeting two-thirds of the time, was, “ I say, Rylands, I think we are in the midst of a great many Tories.” I said, “ By Jove, we are in a regular nest of them.” We were taken somewhat by surprise. We did not expect to be in a nest of Tories, and the Tories and the Liberals were there altogether independent of each other. Now, gentlemen, I am very sorry to trouble you so long on these matters, but there is an imputation upon me I must cast off, and I hope you will bear with me while I allude to it. The imputation is that I have been actuated in the course I have taken in opposition to Mr. Gladstone because I was disappointed that Mr. Gladstone did not give me office. It is as well to put it broadly. Let me say, in the first place, that I should have felt much honoured to have been appointed to a suitable office under the Crown. I don't want to pretend to be free from those weaker feelings we all have. Well, I can tell you this, that if I did want office I went the wrong way to get it. I will tell you why. I very often took a very independent line in the House of Commons, a line against the Government. I have not gone against the Government on critical occasions, but I never hesitated yet, if I thought the Government were wrong, to tell them so, and to criticise their policy and their action. That is not the way to get office. You may rely upon it that no man who does not crawl before a Government, but stands up straight and opposes them, is looked very favourably upon. I will tell you another thing, and it has by far the most important bearing on the case. I recollect Mr. Gladstone speaking at Warrington some years ago. In the course of his speech he spoke of the army of spending

servants of the Crown. He said about that army, who are the men who occupy the different departments of the State in central offices and downwards — “Gentlemen, that army, the spending servants of the Crown, are always alive to their own interests,” and he said further, “when the public are asleep they take advantage of it.” Now, I have tried in my career in Parliament to resist these spending servants of the Crown. No one can deny that. My friend, Mr. Riley, at the Fulledge meeting, said I had not done much in that direction. It is not the opinion of the country, it is not the opinion of my constituents, it is not the opinion of the House of Commons, or of Mr. Gladstone. It is not the opinion of the Ministers of the Crown, nor the opinion of the spending servants of the Crown, and this army always make it a rule that a man who resists them is not a man to have increased authority given him on any account. Let me tell you an anecdote. I must not mention names here either. There was an office of importance in the Government vacant. It was an office it was thought I might have efficiently filled. It was believed in the House of Commons that I should have been appointed to the position. A friend of mine, a member of the House, was walking along Pall Mall when he met the permanent secretary of the office, one of the leading spending servants of the Crown. He was a great man, and associated with the highest circles of the aristocracy, and intimate with members of the Cabinet, from the Prime Minister downwards. My friend said, “Well, I understand Mr. Rylands is to be president of your department.” “Oh” he said, “I can tell you this, if they appoint Mr. Rylands to that post I shall resign. I won’t stay under Mr. Rylands.” Well, gentlemen, in that department I have prevented the wasteful expenditure of public money to the extent of £250,000. I have saved the public a quarter of a million of money, and I have the satisfaction of knowing that it is better as an independent member to save the public a quarter of a million of money than to receive for two or three years £2,000 a year out of the taxes of the country. There is another department to which I have paid a great deal of attention, I mean the Admiralty. Year after year I have denounced the mismanagement of the dockyards. I saw in the *Times* a day or two ago a report of the committee of the Lords of the Admiralty stating that the Lords were quite alive to the fact that the mismanagement in the dockyards was creating a great waste in the building of vessels, and proposing stringent measures for the reform of the work. It is satisfactory to me to know that I have been instrumental in bringing about such a reform, for a great reform will no doubt arise, and there will be a greater saving of public money than there would have been had I been employed as a minister of the Crown in some particular department. My friend the Chairman asked me a question, and I am afraid if I don’t mention it now I shan’t get to allude to it. He says there are two sections of the Liberal party, the Hartington and the Chamberlain section, and wishes to know what course I intend to pursue with regard to them. Up to this time I have been in constant communication in the course I have taken with Mr. Chamberlain’s party. I have attended every meeting of Mr. Chamberlain’s party, and I have acted thoroughly with Mr. Chamberlain. I wish it to be distinctly understood that I have

been in constant consultation with him, have acted with him, and as far as I know of the course of Mr. Chamberlain, intend to support him in the lines on which he is moving in this matter. With regard to Lord Hartington, I have also admired very much indeed the steady determination he has evinced in opposition to these bills which I disapprove of; but I am bound to say that I believe these two sections, to which my friend the chairman has alluded, must necessarily come together. I hope they will come together. At all events I believe there is no reason why they should not come together, and I have every reason to believe that there are many reasons why they may come together. With regard to this Liberal Union. This Liberal Union, as it was called, was a committee, a large Liberal Union Committee. It was a committee formed in London for the maintenance of the legislative union between Great Britain and Ireland. It was simply a committee, the object of which was to circulate literature, pamphlets and other things in favour of the maintenance of the Union. I joined that committee for that purpose. The committee had been engaged circulating literature on the subject when the meeting was held at the Westminster Palace Hotel. It was proposed that instead of keeping as a committee they should form an association for the maintenance of the legislative union, the object of that association to spread information by means of lectures, public meetings, &c., and it was also intended to give confidence to a number of Liberal members of Parliament—Unionists—who were threatened with attacks on their seats by non-unionists. I have no doubt whatever that came out at the meeting, and very strongly; but so far as Burnley is concerned it does not apply to us at all. I don't want the backing of any Liberal Union Committee, and I won't be backed by any Liberal Union Committee. They will no doubt support me, but I don't ask them for money or assistance of that kind. I am, however, a member of the association, and I think it is important that it should be supported by all who are in favour of the maintenance of the Union. Well, now, gentlemen, I have only a few minutes more to speak; I should like to know why this Bill was brought forward. Why was it brought forward at this particular time? When we stood at the election we did not know of anything like this being put forward until it was brought forward. But what did Mr. Gladstone say? I quoted his speech in Burnley—he said, at the time when the elections were coming on, “The Liberal party is in a slight minority of the whole House of Commons, but it is a minority which may become a majority by the aid of the Irish vote.” Mr. Gladstone in his first Midlothian speech said that if the Liberal party was placed in such a position as that, it would not be safe to enter on the consideration of measures in respect to which, at the first step of its progress, it would be in the power of the party coming from Ireland to say, “Unless you do this and unless you do that we will turn you out of Parliament.” This is what Mr. Parnell is saying now, and I believe it was a most unfortunate circumstance that the Bill should have been prepared and brought forward at the time it was in order to get the votes of a section of the House. Let me say further, I know there are a number of gentlemen for whom I have great respect who are in favour of this Bill, and

let me tell you that, in the House of Commons, I forget how many Liberals voted for it. (A voice : 230.) I mean to say out of this 230 there is a large proportion, more or less, who are opposed to the provisions of the Bills. ("No.") Many have stated it. I am not saying what is not known to the public. Members of Parliament, many of them having voted for the Bill, said there must be considerable alterations in it before it would be satisfactory. What does Mr. Bright say about the Bill. (A voice: "Jacob Bright?") No; John Bright. Mr. Bright says "My sympathy with Ireland, north and south, compels me to condemn the proposed legislature. I believe a United Parliament can be and will be more just to all classes in Ireland than any Parliament that can meet in Dublin under the provisions of Mr. Gladstone's Bill." He says "If Mr. Gladstone's great authority were withdrawn from these Bills I doubt if twenty members outside the Irish party in the House of Commons would support them. The more I consider them the more I lament they have been offered to Parliament and to the country." I must say I consider that if Mr. Gladstone had not given his authority to the Bill—if these Bill had been introduced by anyone else they would have been scouted out of the House of Commons. (Cries of "No, no.") I will put it to the conscience of everybody. Let us ask this important matter like men. Let every man put it to his own conscience—I am going to ask him this question—suppose at a general election, when Lord Salisbury was in power, in order to get the Irish vote, Lord Salisbury proposed a measure like this. I know we should dall have gone through the country denouncing it, and stating that Lor Salisbury had sold himself to Mr. Parnell. Don't let us blind ourselves to the facts of the case. Talking about these Bills, I can tell you that within a week of the formation of the Government, gentlemen who are in the Cabinet responsible for these Bills, denounced the Bill in strong terms. A short time previously they denounced them in the country. I hold here—I won't trouble you with reading extracts—the speeches of Sir William Harcourt and Mr. Mundella. Sir Wm. Harcourt, anticipating that Lord Salisbury might enter into compact with the Parnellites, said he would let them for a few months stew in their own Parnellite juice, and when they stunk in the nostrils of the country, then the country would fling them in disgrace to the constituencies, and the nation would pronounce final judgment upon them. I can quote from Mr. Mundella and other members. I am showing you that these men who, up to the time of the formation of the Cabinet, were denouncing measures of this kind, were offered seats in the Cabinet by Mr. Gladstone, and as Mr. Mundella said, they found salvation there, and they agreed to going in with the preparation of this Bill. But when it had been prepared, and when it was submitted to the Cabinet, they agreed to accept it, and recommended it to the House of Commons. The reason I could not vote conscientiously for this Bill was that I considered the Bill did actually establish a separate and Independent Parliament for Ireland. I considered it was opposed to the best interests of the Irish people. I believed it would entail on this country serious dangers and a great increase in the expenditure. I will show you which way directly. I

say, further, that this Bill would not have settled the Irish question. I am asked about the provisions of this Bill ; I will just glance at them as rapidly as I can.—(A voice : “ Conclude.”)—I will, as rapidly as I can, tell you what I object to in the provisions of the Bill. In the first place this Bill, in creating a separate and Independent Parliament, prescribes the dealing with certain matters by the Parliament in Dublin. This is to say that it will not be able to pass laws relating to the making of peace or war, the army and navy, foreign affairs, &c., &c. I consider that all these restrictions are just what will create between this Irish Parliament and Irish Executive the greatest possible friction in political, commercial and financial questions. Just imagine that a Parliament had been created with the appointment of a Prime Minister, Chancellor of the Exchequer, with Secretary of State, with the Privy Councillors surrounding the Lord Lieutenant, who would no doubt attend to the direction or advice of his ministers. Take any one of these subjects ; take for instance trade ; this Parliament of Ireland is forbidden to pass any regulations with regard to trade. Just imagine what will happen. Suppose the people of Ireland were taught by Mr. Parnell, as he has taught them, that in order to develop the industry of Ireland they needed protective duties, don't you think if you passed resolutions in direct opposition to their right to make laws in order to protect the trade of the country,—don't you see that Parliament would be hampered in raising a question which they say is connected with the interest of the country ? Suppose we refused them this protection and they say “ We shall stop paying you money we promised you ” ? I mention that as one case. Suppose there was another question associated with this and other countries. Do you think you can prevent them from passing resolutions ? (A Voice : “ They want trusting ” and interruption.) I come to the payment. What is the payment—the tribute that the Irish Parliament undertakes to pay ? Why it means £4,200,000. That is payment to a foreign Government. If you put out the police it is £3,250,000, customs and excise which this Parliament of Ireland is expected to pay in perpetuity to this country. They say we don't want anything from you,—we have nothing to do with this country. Mr. Riley says they are bound to pay it. Yes, they are bound to pay it if they raise customs and excise, but suppose they refuse to raise these—(Voices : “ Trust them first ” — interruption—another voice : “ Try 'em ”)—I decline on behalf of the taxpayers of this country upon no security whatever to go and pay to the Irish people a large portion of the taxation which is now levied in the interests of the United Kingdom, a share of which belongs to Ireland. But suppose, gentlemen, what I believe would be a fact that the effect of this separation would be to create very much uncertainty, very much want of confidence among people in connection with Ireland ; capital would be withdrawn from the country. (Cries of “ No, no ” and “ Nonsense,” followed by interruption). There would be greater distress—(Loud uproar, in which the remainder of the sentence was lost.) There are many other points in connection with these bills. I might say that the Irish Land Bill—the Purchase Bill—is inseparable from the Home Rule Bill. I know old Radicals who say, “ You could vote for Home Rule and not for

the other," but if you pass the Home Rule Bill you will find the Tories and Whigs joining and passing—(Interruption.) You will then find you will not be able to prevent the Land Purchase Bill being passed. Do you think the English people are to be taxed to the extent of—(Cries of "No, no," and uproar.) The bill provides this amount that the rents are to be collected to pay this interest on sinking fund, this £150,000,000. Are you gentlemen so ignorant of what has been going on in Ireland during the last few years as not to know that the most difficult thing in all the world is to collect rents if they are behindhand? I can tell you that when Mr. Gladstone was delivering his speech in moving the Land Bill Mr. Bright was listening to him. The following day I saw him, when he said, "When Mr. Gladstone was speaking about security, and the amount of money to collect for the rents, I was nearly getting up and interrupting Mr. Gladstone, and asking him to say who will have the power of eviction." They will never get rents in Ireland without there is some power. Who are to have the power of eviction? Why, of course, the Irish representatives, the Irish Parliament. Do you think from what you have heard about the dealing of the Land League and Mr. Parnell—do you think if the Irish Parliament were to put in force evictions—do you think these members of the Irish Parliament would be re-elected? Certainly not. They would be discredited, and particularly it would be said that all this money was being paid into the hands of foreigners in England. I tell you, rather than be a party—(Interruption.) A considerable number of landowners for 100 years have been receiving more rents than they were entitled to, so I say I should be guilty of an act which would be a discredit to my whole life as a public man. I am much obliged to you for the very kind attention that you have given to me. I would only say this, that amongst all things I have the greatest fear about in connection with this bill is that so far from settling the question, it will bring us more trouble. I have got speeches of Mr. Parnell to prove that they never will be satisfied until they have a Parliament with such complete power that they shall be able to manage the affairs of Ireland as a nation. They go for this measure, no doubt, speaking in a reasonable way at the present time because they know if they get a Parliament like this they will get enormous advantages on which they can raise their strength for future labours. I know what is said; I have heard it in the House of Commons; I have heard it privately from many members of the House of Commons, that if these people won't submit, if they refuse to pay this tribute, if they refuse to submit to the control of England, we have the supremacy of our military and navy. No doubt we have, but I do believe if the demands of this bill should render it necessary that we should make use of the military and navy in order to re-conquer the country, I say it would be a crime of fratricide. This is a contemplation I shrink to take, and when people speak of the supremacy of England being assured, and when I see men endanger such a catastrophe, they don't show the prudence and caution of statesmanship. I say you have in all these questions, of rent, protective duties, the various arrangements with regard to trade, with reference to foreign complications, circumstances on which these countries might sooner or later be brought into conflict. Fortunately, I

think that the Bill I have been talking about is dead. (Loud cries of "No, no", and uproar.) It is dead in Parliament. (Interruption, and a Voice: "You tried to kill it,")—and then that the Bill should not be proceeded with in the autumn. That I think to be a very dangerous course, because Mr. Gladstone not only felt himself—(Interruption during which Mr. Rylands was understood to regret the course Mr. Gladstone laid himself open to pursue.) Continuing, he said: I believe he will have to go back to the plan of giving such a measure of local government to Ireland as he would give to Scotland, England and Wales. This was what Mr. Gladstone said himself, and what I believe he will have to go back to. ("Never.") If he goes back to that, as I believe he will, I can only say I shall be delighted to support him in any measure which would give satisfaction to the Irish people, to manage to a large extent their own affairs. I understood that the three conditions Mr. Gladstone insisted on formerly were, that nothing must endanger the unity of the kingdom, nothing must interfere with the supremacy of the British Parliament, which must adequately protect the minority in Ireland. I will not consent to accept a measure except all these three conditions are included. Gentlemen, if there is a dissolution, and if I am again honoured by the choice of the electors of Burnley, I shall be prepared on these matters to give a cordial support to Mr. Gladstone. Now you must understand when people tell you that the question before you is Home Rule or Coercion—I say it is nothing of the kind. I say so far as I am concerned I am entirely opposed to Coercion. Notwithstanding I am opposed to Coercion, I would not give other countries such laws and such powers as would allow property to be destroyed, murder to be committed, and the offenders go unpunished. I want life and property to be safe, and order to be maintained; but I am altogether opposed to imprisoning men without trial, or applying the extreme provisions of the Act of 1881. Suppose on the contrary I am not selected by the Liberals of Burnley. Well then, I need not tell you that that will be to me a source of great pain and regret. If the Liberals of Burnley, in the event of a dissolution, withdraw their confidence from me, and I cease to be a member for Burnley, I shall not stand for any other constituency, and you will close my public career. It will be sad to me, but I shall have the satisfaction of feeling that during my public life, beginning from my school-boy days, for fifty years I have been connected with every movement in favour of getting civil and religious liberty, commercial advantages and freedom for this country. I shall feel that while before I went into Parliament I was engaged actively in the various struggles which the Liberal party were making to maintain their views and to increase the recognition of them—I shall recollect that during the time I have been in Parliament, now nearly twenty years—I have been honoured by having the liberty of giving my vote for some of the great measures which during that time Mr. Gladstone has passed for the benefit of his country, and which I believe, whatever may be the differences of opinion now, will make his name illustrious in the history of this country. I shall have the satisfaction of looking back upon many triumphs I have enjoyed both in the House and out of it in connection with the great Liberal party, with

which I have been so long identified, and I shall console myself in the disappointment I shall feel by recollecting that notwithstanding all the efforts I have made for 50 years, notwithstanding the deep interest I have felt with you and the kind sympathy I have received from you, the close connection we have had together, that on account of one single difference of opinion you withdraw your confidence from me and relegate me to private life.

After thanking the meeting for the kind and courteous attention which had been given him, Mr. Rylands resumed his seat.

No. VI.

Address to the Electors of Burnley, delivered at Lowerhouse, June, 1886.

Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen : I am very pleased, notwithstanding there is some difference in opinion, which I regret to see, to come to Lowerhouse. I have always liked the Lowerhouse people. I have received from them at every election the warmest possible support, and therefore I am pleased to come and see you to-night. You recollect that last November, when I had the honour of standing before you, I alluded to a number of very important public questions, and I spoke to you about the great expenditure—the lavish and wasteful national expenditure—which I had been seeking, as your former representative, as far as possible to reduce. I spoke of taxation, which I believed was unfairly levied, and which might be very much altered in the interests of the working classes ; I spoke of the reform of the Land Laws, and pointed out that measures might be adopted which would have the effect, not of injuring the landlords in any way, but of increasing to a large extent the production of food in the country, and of providing industry and securing prosperity to many who were then starving. Gentlemen, I looked forward, when I was asking for your support in November, to a Parliament in which I might have been some use to you. I went to Parliament not to seek anything for myself ; I have not got a penny by being a member of Parliament ; I have given a great deal of time to its duties ; I have acted to the best of my ability ; and I have studied not only to promote the interests of the United Kingdom at large, but I think my constituents at Burnley, although they may differ from me on this point at present, will at all events bear testimony that I have always been anxious to promote, in every way I could, the interests of my constituents. I have never had anything but a desire to do what was just and right, and make myself as useful as I could. But that prospect of good and useful legislation for the benefit of you and the United Kingdom has all been swept away. This last Parliament has been practically an abortion ; it has been a barren Parliament ; it has done nothing for any of the people of this country. We have wasted, so to speak, the months we have been sitting in London ; and why has it been so ? Because, like a thunderbolt from a blue sky, this measure which Mr. Gladstone has brought forward struck us all with astonish-

ment, and many of us in the House of Commons with dismay. It swept away all those great questions that we as Liberals were anxious to promote, and it brought us face to face with one of the most serious questions that ever was submitted by any Prime Minister before. I regret as much as any of you that there should have been a measure produced that we as a united Liberal party could not accept. You must not suppose that it is any pleasure to me to have gone against Mr. Gladstone in the late division. You know very well that I have been a supporter of Mr. Gladstone since he joined the Liberal party. I was a Liberal long before Mr. Gladstone was a Liberal. I was a Liberal when Mr. Gladstone was a High Church Tory, but ever since he took the lead of the Liberal party I have supported him until he produced a measure which I do not believe is consistent with true Liberalism, and which I do not believe is in the interests of the country, and therefore, when this measure was produced the whole situation was changed. How was it likely that we could expect such a measure from Mr. Gladstone? Don't you know that within two or three years he has, when speaking of local self-government for Ireland, said he would be no party to any measure that could not equally be given to England, Scotland, and Wales? Don't you know that he has said again and again he would be no party to any disruption of the kingdom—any separate Government for Ireland that did not maintain the unity of the kingdom and the supremacy of the Imperial Parliament. He said that again and again, and therefore we in the House of Commons were utterly surprised and astonished when this Bill was produced. My distinguished friend, Mr. John Bright, has stated in a letter that he did not believe if the measure had been produced by any less authority than Mr. Gladstone, that twenty members of the House of Commons would have voted for it. I can tell you, gentlemen, from what I know from personal intimacy, and from many conversations with numerous Liberal members of the House of Commons, many of those who voted for the second reading of the Bill—I tell you as a positive fact that I have no more doubt about it than that I am standing on this platform, when I say that if that measure had been produced by any other person than our great leader, Mr. Gladstone, it would have been scouted out of the House of Commons. That is a fact, and I tell you that many of the members for various reasons voted for the second reading of the Bill, although at the time they believed that the measure, in its then shape, was dangerous. But, gentlemen, I did not think it was right to take that course, and therefore I voted against the Bill; and it seems that because I voted against the Bill I am to be condemned. I ask any of you—let me put it to the conscience and the judgment of any man in this room—would you have respected me if, believing as I did, that this Bill—I may say these Bills, for there are two Bills, one for Home Rule and the other for Land Purchase—believing that these Bills were injurious to the country and dangerous in the future, what would you have thought of me if I had voted for them? The Conservatives and I differ upon many subjects, but upon this we were agreed. If a foreign army were to threaten to invade this country as Napoleon did before many here were born, then Conservatives and Radicals would join

together, and I hope the youngest amongst us will remember that in regard to the great questions that may affect the interests of this country in the world, we ought to place patriotism before party. I have been a very sound party man. Nobody can say I have not been a sound party man, but I should be ashamed of myself if I refused to go hand in hand with Conservatives in any good work. I remember perfectly well in those days of the famine, before the repeal of the Corn Laws, in my native town of Warrington, I, along with the rector of the parish, who was a very strong political opponent of mine, and with a great number of other leading Conservatives of Warrington, besides dissenting ministers and Radicals of various kinds, went from door to door relieving the distress. What would you have said of me if, feeling as I did at that time the necessity of aiding my poorer brethren, I had stood aside because I had to go with Tories? Let us dismiss that for a moment entirely; let us act according to our own conscientious convictions of what is right, whatever views others happen to take. It may be that others who go with us are Conservatives, but the meeting at the Opera House was never intended to be a Tory meeting. It is quite true a number of Tories were there, but I went to support my noble friend, Lord Hartington, and a number of other Liberals went to that meeting in order to oppose measures which we thought to be dangerous to this country. I cannot think you believe that a member of Parliament is to be a mere delegate. Do you believe it? Do you think that a member of Parliament is to be a mere delegate and have no thought of his own; that he is to go to Parliament, and, without exercising his own brain, and without exercising his own conscience, he is at all times to say to his constituents, "Now, whatever you say, or whatever the Burnley Liberal Council decide I will submit to?" If you have members of Parliament of that kind the British Parliament will very soon sink beneath contempt. You will very soon have in Parliament people who will not be of any good to you. There are Parliaments in the world containing men of that description. There is too much of it in America. You will never have independent members of Parliament, above all personal interest, above all corruption, bribes and jobbery; you will never have men of that kind if you insist upon having a lot of delegates. What will induce a man to be a delegate? Simply this, that he can make something by being in Parliament. If a man is unworthy enough to say "I will have no conscience of my own and no views of my own," he will take good care, if he gets into Parliament, to secure some means of getting money into his pocket. You have a right, in choosing a member of Parliament, to have regard to his general opinions. You had regard to my general views. I have never disguised my opinions. In former elections I have gone over the whole ground of politics, and you knew generally what my views were. Knowing my views generally, you had confidence in me, and as it happens in regard to the great questions upon which I was enabled to speak to you, I have gone with the opinions you yourselves held because I entertained those opinions myself conscientiously. But on this question what happened? Why, gentlemen, you recollect that at the time of the election, Mr. Gladstone said nothing of any importance about Ireland except that he would oppose any legislation for Ireland that

would separate Ireland from the other parts of the United Kingdom. But at that time the Irish were taking a rather remarkable course. I will remind you about something that took place, because it is possible you have forgotten it. I have not forgotten the manifesto Mr. Parnell issued at the time of the election last November—this Mr. Parnell, who is now to be taken as your friend, and of whom it is considered that any terms he makes are perfectly safe and may be depended upon. On November 20, 1885, Mr. Parnell, who is now described as so good a friend to the Liberal party headed by Mr. Gladstone, said the Liberal party were making an appeal under false pretences, and he described that party as being perfidious, dangerous, and incompetent. [Mr. Rylands here read the manifesto in question through.] What do you think of a manifesto like that, issued so late as last November? Does that sound like a manifesto from a gentleman who is boiling over with the warmest feelings of affection to the Liberal party? You very properly cheered Mr. Gladstone when I came in. I don't object to it for a moment, but let us understand one another. Do you think Mr. Gladstone is infallible? Do you think he cannot make mistakes? As it happens, he admits that he has made mistakes. You recollect in the last Parliament there was the bombardment of Alexandria, the frightful destruction of life at Suakim, and a great expenditure of money. I ventured in Parliament to strongly protest against that policy. Mr. Gladstone, in his Midlothian address last November, admitted that there had been mistakes in his Egyptian policy. But my point is this: if Mr. Gladstone is not infallible, surely we must all exercise our judgment in regard to any measures that he proposes. Of course we Liberals are more disposed to accept a measure of Mr. Gladstone's than to oppose it, but still we are bound, every one of us, to consider carefully in our minds whether the measure is right or wrong; and if we believe it is wrong, then surely nobody will expect that a member of Parliament who believes it is wrong should go in its support. Under the circumstances I have alluded to, coupled with the fact that I have so completely fulfilled the expectations of my Burnley friends with this exception—nobody can say I have not kept in harmony with the great body of the Liberal party in Burnley, and nobody can say I have not done my duty as far as my ability would allow me to do it—I say I have reason to complain that after nearly eleven years' service, during which you have had no cause of complaint, and during which I have devoted all my time and energies to your service without any stint in any way; I say I think I have a right to complain if my old friends, simply because on this point I entertain a conscientious and serious objection in the interests of the country, I think it is rather hard if on that account I should be, as some people call it, given the sack. I admit that if you were selecting a new candidate; if a man had come before you who had had no previous connection with you, you might have taken this as a question upon which the issue should be decided, and refused to accept a candidate who did not agree with you, but I think it is a very different thing with an old friend and an old servant. I think, although I may have differed from some of you, it is not very generous that I should not be supported by many of those with whom I

have had such great pleasure in working before. A very worthy and excellent friend of mine, who is not here, but who has been one of the most active members of the Liberal committee—I mean Mr. John Heap—wrote a letter to me stating as his reason for objecting to the course I was taking, that I was in favour of coercion. Now if Mr. Heap had been here I should have told him, as I tell you, that coercion is not what I am in favour of. I do not want coercion. But let us understand what coercion really means. If the powers of Government are used to punish and imprison men for their political opinions, that is coercion that cannot be justified, and I am altogether opposed to it. I was opposed to Mr. Gladstone's Coercion Bill of 1881. Under that Bill Mr. Gladstone's Government imprisoned 1,000 men without trial. Not one of them was even brought before the magistrates or judges to hear the charges against them. They were imprisoned very often upon information which might have been given spitefully against them, and they were put in prison without having an opportunity of going before a jury. I abominate any such proceedings. I think you have no right to imprison men without giving them an opportunity of hearing the charge against them, and of answering that charge, and that is the kind of coercion that I altogether disapprove of, and I shall be very sorry to see any coercive measures of that kind re-enacted. I would allow any man to exercise his political opinions on any question according to his conscience and judgment. I cannot use language sufficiently expressive of my detestation of that most distasteful thing—that, because a man happens to have opinions different from the executive or powers of government, that, therefore, he should be put in prison. That is coercion without doubt ; but in Ireland there is something else besides political opinion. There are unfortunately a large number of crimes of a peculiar character in Ireland. It is quite true that, under orders, there are fewer of these crimes at the present time. Still, even recently there have been crimes that have been horrifying. There was a case only a few weeks ago of a poor old man who had supplied something to one who was boycotted. This poor old man, with his daughters, lived in a part of the country which was rather lonely, and one night a number of men went with masks on their faces, and called this man before them. The daughters knelt down and begged for the old man's life. The men did not shoot him dead, but they shot his legs, and he died in great agony before his weeping family. Do you think that crimes like that should go unpunished? Do you think that the authority of the law should not be made use of to stop atrocities of that kind? And when you heard, as you did recently, that an order was sent forth that crimes of that kind should be stopped, and that the maiming of cattle and treating them with the greatest cruelty should cease, do you think that crimes of that kind should not be dealt with, and that if men who were guilty of such crimes were caught and punished that it would be coercion? Then there has been destruction of property in various directions. Do you think it is right, because a man happens not to belong to a particular society in Ireland ; if he does not choose to join a body with the view of making his neighbours' lives miserable, do you think it is right that should go on and the law not take means to punish them? I know

you don't. You English men would never stand anything of the kind. In England we should all rise to a man and say that the law must be maintained, and that if there was not sufficient power to ferret out and punish these crimes the Executive must have that power. What is the fact in this very case? Why, although this crime must have been known to a considerable number of persons, nobody up to this day has been discovered as the perpetrator, and nobody has been punished. I, for one, put aside coercion; I object to coercion as much as anybody, but I say the Government are bound to see that law and order are properly provided for in Ireland as well as in the other parts of the kingdom. I therefore dismiss that idea of coercion, and I hope that none of my friends will suppose for a moment that I am in favour of coercion, or that I am not in favour of any alternative. I am in favour of doing anything in my power, and everything in the power of Government, to promote the prosperity and welfare of the Irish people. I am quite prepared to support any scheme of giving very enlarged self-government to Ireland, which should be given to other parts of the kingdom, but subject to these conditions:—The first is, I would maintain the unity of the kingdom; secondly, I would maintain the supremacy of the British Parliament; and thirdly, I would provide for the protection of the minority in Ireland. Now these are very reasonable propositions, you will see, and also they are propositions which Mr. Gladstone himself laid down as being conditions which ought to be observed in any measure for local government. To show you that I am not hostile to any measure of a reasonable and fair character, I suggested to the Government through an influential gentleman who saw me on their behalf, that if they would withdraw that Bill and bring forward a resolution in favour of extended powers of local self-government for Ireland subject to the three conditions I have named, I had no doubt whatever that the Liberal party would be united upon it, and this great disruption would have been avoided if Mr. Gladstone, seeing as he did see, that there was a great difference of opinion, and that in his own ranks many of the men who were going to vote for the second reading disapproved of the bills—if he had withdrawn his bills there would have been no dissolution and no disruption of the party; and then in August or October he might have brought forward further bills which were not open to the great objections we pointed out. Curiously enough Mr. Gladstone almost comes to the point I have stated, because in speaking of the bills being dead, and admitting there was considerable objection to them, he said “There is one thing that survives, and that is the principle and policy of self-government for Ireland. To candidates this proposition leaves absolute freedom as to the means for giving effect to self-government for Ireland, and, of course, as to the question of land purchase.” If Mr. Gladstone says that, why am I opposed, gentlemen? My friend Alderman Greenwood is opposing me. I have not a word to say in opposition to that, if he thinks it right. He is a personal friend of mine, and I respect him, and hope nothing will occur in this contest that will prevent us being good friends in the future. If Mr. Gladstone's words are to be taken as they stand, he says a candidate in favour of the principle and policy of self-government for Ireland ought to have

absolute freedom as to the means for giving effect to self-government for Ireland, and, of course, as to the question of land purchase; then Mr. Gladstone, to be consistent, should tell you gentlemen of Lowerhouse that you have now a candidate before you in my person who is in favour of self-government to Ireland, and to support me, leaving me absolutely at liberty in regard to any details as to the proposed measure, and in regard to land purchase. I have told you what my conditions are; I have used the language which Mr. Gladstone himself used within a very short period; therefore I say that what you have to do, if you will allow me to say so, is that you may reasonably support me with the understanding that I am altogether in favour of a general measure applicable not only to Ireland but to Scotland and Wales, subject to the conditions which I have laid down. But at the same time I tell you that if the Bill made its appearance in the House next October in the form in which it now appears, I should oppose that Bill, and therefore it is simply that I am prepared to support it if Mr. Gladstone thinks fit to take any other line and get rid of what I object to in these Bills; and I have no doubt a great number of Liberal members would be happy to join in such a measure as might give satisfaction to Ireland upon right principles, and at the same time be made applicable to Scotland and other parts of the kingdom. Why is this Bill brought forward now? That is the question. Why did Mr. Gladstone, never having given the slightest intimation of it, bring forward these Bills at the beginning of Parliament? It is very curious that Mr. Gladstone, last November, while the elections were going on, and when every Liberal was anxious that there should be a large Liberal majority returned, should say he wanted a large majority over the Tories and Parnellites combined, that he might be independent of the Parnellites, and deal with the Irish question in an independent and judicious manner. He said:—"Let me suppose that the Liberal party might be returned to the coming Parliament in a minority, but in a minority which might become a majority by aid of the Irish vote; and I will suppose that, owing to some cause, the present Government— (that is, Lord Salisbury's Government)—has disappeared, and a Liberal party was called to deal with this great constitutional question of the government of Ireland in a position where it was a minority dependent on the Irish vote for converting it into a majority. Now I tell you seriously and solemnly, that though I believe the Liberal party to be honourable, patriotic, and trustworthy, in such a position as that it would not be safe for it to enter on the consideration of a measure in respect to which, at the first step of its progress, it would be in the power of a party coming from Ireland to say 'Unless you do this and unless you do that we will turn you out to-morrow.'" Gentlemen, that circumstance occurred to the very letter. Mr. Parnell did intimate to Mr. Gladstone that unless he brought forward a measure which he could support, as they had turned out Lord Salisbury so they would turn him out; and you have this measure brought forward with the object of turning the Liberal minority into a majority. Gentlemen, I think that is a most regrettable circumstance; I think it is most unfortunate that we should be placed in this position; for just consider what the position is. For many years past, in the House of Commons

and out of it, there have been two armies really fighting in the field of battle. At the head of one has been our illustrious leader, Mr. Gladstone, who has headed and led with wisdom the Liberal party. That army has been seeking from time to time to give great benefits to Ireland, and at the same time maintain law and order in the country. At the head of the other party was Mr. Parnell. In the House of Commons there was a compact body of Irish members who were using every constitutional and many unconstitutional methods to force Parliament to yield all they demanded. Then behind these men—men against whom I do not want to bring any charge—but behind them, and in fact moving them, there was a great body of skirmishers paid by American gold. And now, it so happens that, under the unfortunate circumstances of the last election, when a sufficient number of Liberals was not returned to control both Conservatives and Parnellites, Mr. Gladstone, when he had to consider bringing forward his measures conciliated and submitted himself to these 86 members in order to get their support, and we are called upon as a nation in this great struggle to surrender meanly and dishonourably.—After explaining that he had carefully avoided saying anything in disapprobation of Mr. Gladstone, Mr. Rylands spoke of the Premier's optimism, and showed that in his Irish Church Act and his two Irish Land Bills he had predicted that each measure would prove a message of peace to Ireland, and remove to a large extent the antagonism which existed between Ireland and this country. He admitted that these measures, while good in themselves, had not had time to work, and this was what was now wanted. There had been great progress in Ireland certainly since 1850, and what he wanted was that there should be not only good measures given with a view to still further promoting the prosperity of Ireland, but that they should allow the measures which had already been passed time to operate. He continued: I believe that a firm Liberal Government for Ireland, with the understanding that moderate and reasonable reforms should be given, would certainly tend to allay to a large extent the dissatisfaction of the country. This measure is said by Mr. Gladstone, with his hopeful nature—just as he believed these other measures were going to bring peace to Ireland and settle all the Irish difficulty—to be a great message of peace to Ireland, and one that will be accepted with gratitude, and that the Irish will be so grateful to England that they will not in future raise any difficulties, and we shall be able to attend to our own affairs. Shall we? He said that, no doubt, believing he was going to get rid of the Irish members from the House of Commons. Mr. Peter Taylor, an old friend of mine, formerly member for Leicester, and as good a Radical as ever lived, wrote to me the other day entirely approving of the course I had taken, and he said "I believe Mr. Gladstone has some peculiar defect in moral perspective and in judging of the real value of certain things, because the great object of this Bill is to get rid of Irish members of Parliament in order to put a stop to obstruction. It is very much like the way the Chinese cook a pig by burning down a house." If you get rid of the Irish members, we complained—there would be taxation without representation, and Mr. Gladstone then agreed to bring back a certain number just to deal with imperial affairs. Just imagine, gentlemen, how that will work.

There may be two parties evenly balanced, and Mr. Parnell and his friends, who might be anxious for further concessions to Ireland, might say to the Government, "Will you give us these concessions?" If the Government said "No," then the Irish members would flock to Parliament and pass some resolution, perhaps upon some foreign question, and turn out the Government. You must either have a Parliament constituted as an Imperial Parliament, fairly representing all the three kingdoms, or you will make matters worse by allowing them to come to our Parliament and interfere with our proceedings there. The Bill is absolutely unworkable, and certainly does a great injustice to the English people. Is it final? I heard that question put in the House of Commons by Sir Michael Hicks-Beach. He asked if the proposals were a final settlement, and Mr. O'Brien responded "Every one of them." Well, now, I have before me an extract from the *Irish World*, which is an American newspaper that collects to a large extent the funds which pay the Irish members at the present moment, and which absolutely denounces the idea that such a measure as this that Mr. Gladstone proposes can be accepted as a final settlement of the question. The writer says:—"When Hicks-Beach asked whether the Irish members of Parliament would be content with Mr. Gladstone's proposal as a final settlement, Mr. O'Brien said 'Every one of them!' This reply may have been fitting in a heated debate, but in sober earnest, and after cool reflection, I do not think it would be repeated. For if the Irish representatives are really in favour of the Bill as it stands, or even with minor modifications, I cannot believe that they fairly represent Irish Nationalism. It will, of course, be proper for Mr. Parnell to support the measure as it stands till the second reading, for it is only its principle—the concession of Home Rule—that will so far be involved, but in committee very important amendments will be required to make it either workable or acceptable. Mr. Gladstone's bill would not make Ireland a nation, nor an autonomous state, but merely a colony. It would not even be a free colony, like Canada or Queensland, but would be a colony in leading strings—a Crown colony, like Jamaica, in everything but in name." I told the Burnley Liberal Council that the 4½ millions which the Irish Parliament were to pay out of the excise and customs would never be paid, and the *Irish World* says:—"The self-governing colonies do not contribute to the Imperial Exchequer; but Ireland is to be a tribute-paying Jamaica; and a receiver-general is to be appointed to grab all her taxes in the interest of foreign bondholders, as the English Receiver-General at Cairo grabs the Egyptian revenues. As I pointed out on a former occasion, there is one essential element in Mr. Gladstone's scheme that absolutely bars even the semblance of Ireland's independent autonomy. This is the retention of the Lord-Lieutenant. He is to have greater powers and less responsibilities than any of his predecessors. He is to be in Ireland the pedagogue with the ferule. He is endowed with the powers of the sword—every armed man in the country is at his orders. As a consequence he is the real Executive Government, and the Irish Ministry must be a paralytic sham. He is further endowed with a veto power, in the exercise of which he is not responsible to Ireland,

nor obliged to conform to the advice of Irish ministers. The Receiver-General is to get hold of all Irish revenues, and secure England's demand before a penny of them will be at Ireland's disposal. It also endows the Lord Lieutenant with the key of the Treasury, for no money is to be spent or raised without his recommendation. I have just this one word to say about Gladstone's scheme: if the Lord Lieutenant is an essential feature of it, the whole Bill should be rejected. There cannot be any Irish independence, any real autonomy, any restored nationhood with a foreign master. I trust that the Irish representatives—every man of them—will say boldly, solemnly, and distinctly that unless the despotic Lord Lieutenancy be abolished they will not support the Bill. They must either do this, or, by their votes, place Irish liberty and independence beneath an alien despot's heel." Gentlemen, you cannot believe that the English people will willingly grant all these claims if they are to be put upon us one after the other. If these Bills were adopted, if any such claims were pressed upon Parliament, you would then have the Irish members obstructing all the other business, and you would have all the difficulties we have now in dealing with our own affairs. Sir Wm. Harcourt and supporters of the Government Bills said, "We have, as a last resource, the army and navy of England," and it might very well happen that in consequence of the Irish Parliamentary Executive refusing to pay this tribute, refusing to pay the charges due to England, refusing all the conditions imposed upon them, we should have a proposal in the House of Commons to employ the armed forces of the Crown in order to subject the Irish people by the military forces of the country, and make them submit to us and the supremacy of the kingdom. I will not be a party to such a dangerous policy, and I will refuse to give what I believe would no doubt lead to a very great danger, and would certainly lead to strong anti-English feelings, and to the demands which are suggested by the *Irish World*; and I do hope that the good sense of the English people will decline to be led into a scheme the result of which would inevitably be, not that the Irish question would be settled, but that would certainly lead to a serious opposition between Ireland and this country, eventuating, probably, in our having to use armed force to subdue that country. In Ireland there are practically two nations. There is not only the South and West, which are represented by Mr. Parnell and his followers, but in Ulster and in other parts there are 1,300,000 Protestants belonging to the Church of England, the Wesleyans, Presbyterians, &c., all industrious, enterprising men. Adding to these 200,000 loyal Catholics, there are one-and-a-half million loyalists, and I say that every one of us is bound in his conscience to say that any measures which are passed by the Imperial Parliament shall in no way endanger the rights, the liberties, and the properties of these one-and-a-quarter millions that are with us in blood and religion. I can tell you that there have been speeches made and letters written absolutely creating the very strongest animosity against the linen trade of Belfast, which employs thousands of working people, but which they actually alleged was a curse to the country. That is the idea that a number of gentlemen have who are making this outcry, that a trade, one of the most prosperous in

Ireland, employing thousands of people and increasing the welfare of the people, is a curse to Ireland. I have not time to deal with the Land Bill, but that is a most monstrous proposition, and, whatever is said, if the Home Rule Bill passes the Land Bill will follow. And let every man understand that the Land Bill means this—we shall have to pay £150,000,000 in order to purchase the land of Ireland, and to pay all the landowners of Ireland. Just imagine for a moment how the bargain is to be struck. It is not that the tenants and landowners are to come to terms as to what the tenant is willing to give. Nothing of the sort. Under this Bill, if a landowner says, “I want to sell,” the tenants are compelled to buy, subject to the price being fixed by the Court. Can you imagine any scheme more wild or more dangerous? One of the greatest difficulties is the collection of rents in Ireland, and yet it is proposed we should pay 150 millions and leave the collection of rents to the Irish Executive. If you allow Parliament to act in that suicidal manner you will deserve all you will get. You will increase the National Debt by something like one-fourth; you will increase the taxation in this country by at least eight millions; and there is not a man amongst you who will not be injured directly or indirectly by this monstrous proposition. Because it is not only that you will have to pay more taxes, but every burden which is put upon the country tends to lessen the capital, and handicap us in the struggle for supremacy in the markets of the world. Don’t suppose if you get the Home Rule Bill you can stop without the Land Bill. It will not only be supported by the Government, but all the Conservative and Whig landowners will support it, and you will have to pay that money. It is all very well for a number of Radicals to say “We shall support the Home Rule Bill, but not the Land Bill,” but they would be over-ruled by a large majority. Therefore, if you allow this Home Rule Bill to pass, you will also be charged with this enormous sum of money on account of the Land Bill. Let me beg each of you not to come to a conclusion upon this matter without careful consideration. If you don’t believe we have an infallible Prime Minister, whose every word must be received and submitted to as though it came direct from an inspired source; if you don’t believe that, then every one of you in your consciences is bound to judge of this question as those who shall give an account. I am not the only man who has to give an account. I did my duty as I believed after careful consideration, and with a great deal of pain in separating myself from many with whom I am on intimate political terms. But still I did it, as I hope I shall seek in all these great questions affecting the welfare of my fellow-countrymen so long as I am in Parliament. I followed my conscientious convictions. That position I arrived at after careful consideration as binding upon me, and I always give my votes in Parliament as one who in these solemn circumstances has to give an account not only to you, but to the highest Authority. And so you, everyone of you in this election, don’t suppose that simply because you are going with the Burnley Liberal Council you will be absolved from the responsibility of deciding upon the question, which may affect not only you but your children and your children’s children; which may involve Ireland itself in civil war; which

will certainly increase the distress and destitution of the country ; which might possibly lead to foreign complications ; which will certainly involve this country in enormous taxation and burdens ; and which would also possibly do serious injury to that large class of our fellow-countrymen in the North of Ireland. I say, don't for a moment suppose, if you give a vote upon this, the most serious question which has been put before you in your time, and give a vote unthinkingly, from personal partiality, or from submission to the high authority of Mr. Gladstone—don't suppose you will be absolved from the penalty of any mistake you make. The penalty will fall, and we have heard about the sins of the fathers being visited on the children to the third and fourth generation ; and I thoroughly believe if this country makes the mistake of supporting bills like these, they will hand down to their successors an heritage of misfortune and of disaster. I beg of you, in coming to a conclusion in regard to this matter, to carefully consider and judge impartially. I hope the result of this great controversy may be that there may be a sufficient number of Unionists returned to the House of Commons ; that in any measure that may be adopted—and I hope important measures will be adopted for the future welfare of Ireland—we may be able to secure the advancement of that grand old flag under which this country has marched to great prosperity and influence, and that we may maintain the unity of the kingdom and also support the integrity of the empire.

MISCELLANEOUS SPEECHES.

No. I.

*Address to his Constituents in the Public Hall, Warrington,
February 2, 1870.*

Mr. Chairman, ladies, and gentlemen : It is a novel custom for a member for Warrington to appear before you on such an occasion as the present. It is the first occasion since Warrington has had a Parliamentary representative given to it that the representative of Warrington has thought fit to appear before his constituents, to give an account of his stewardship. When Warrington was first enfranchised it was represented by a Liberal member of an aristocratic family. Mr. Hornby had very little interest in the town and little interest in politics, and he showed no disposition to meet his constituents—but he was only member for a couple of years. He was succeeded by Mr. Blackburne, an old Tory, a respectable, downright, old Tory, who would truckle to nobody. He was a Tory, and no mistake about it, therefore he did not pretend to any popular consideration and respect. He is still living, and we may say of him that he is a fine, hale, old English gentleman, respected by all who know him, and by me, although he differs from me, because I know that his opinions are conscientious and decided. He was succeeded by my honourable predecessor, who represented this borough for 20 years and upwards, and during the whole of that 20 years—although he did not profess to be an extreme Tory—gentlemen, you know that he did not profess to be an extreme Tory—I rather fancy he would like to have got support from both sides. He never appeared before his constituents in those 20 long years to give an account of his stewardship. Now, gentlemen, I don't wish to make any obnoxious remarks in reference to my predecessor to-night. I wish, as far as possible, that something of the bitterness of political feeling should cease in this town. I think there has been too much of it. I don't want any man to deny his principles, but I think that, having exercised his vote according to the best of his judgment and ability, he ought not to carry out his personal feelings to the extent which is done in some quarters. Now, gentlemen, I think it is a good custom for a member to give an account of his stewardship to his constituents. It is a good thing to see the faces of men. They say that “iron sharpeneth iron;” so does the face of a friend sharpen his friend. And so it is that members of Parliament require encouragement and support in favour of their policy and measures outside the House of Commons, and in the House of Commons they like to know and feel that in the course they

have taken they have had the support and concurrence of those whom they represent ; and therefore I appear before you in order to get that support and that encouragement. Now, gentlemen, I should have had the meeting earlier, but you recollect that at Whitsuntide last year there was a grand demonstration in this town, and I look back upon it with pleasure and gratitude. I remember that a procession of thousands walked through the streets of Warrington in my honour as the Liberal representative of the borough, and I recollect that it was watched by multitudes who showed in every street their friendly feelings of respect and regard ; and I never received from the hands of my fellow townsmen so great a mark of consideration and respect as I received on that day. We came to this hall, and a great meeting, such as I now have the honour to address, was assembled, a meeting of intelligent artizans and electors of the borough. I had then an opportunity of speaking to them on a great portion of the proceedings of the session of Parliament, which was then half completed, and I thought that, having spoken to them, and to that extent given an account of my proceedings in Parliament, it was desirable to postpone until a later period the opportunity of appearing before you again for a similar purpose. Well, now, at the time I spoke in Whit-week the Irish Church Bill had passed through the second reading, through committee with great majorities, and there appeared to be no probability of its not passing in its main features in the House of Commons, and after the third reading there was only a doubt as to whether the House of Lords would venture to mutilate the Bill. I told you on that occasion I had voted for the Irish Church Bill in every division, and I voted in favour of the Bill and in support of the Government. I was not absent from any division, and I told you then that I had no fear that the House of Lords would in any way venture to throw out the Bill. I thought it possible that they might try to get a little more plunder for the Church, but I knew they dared not, in the face of the express will of the people, of this country—they dared not throw out the Bill which had received the sanction of so large a majority in the country. I told you on that occasion I felt honoured in having gone into the lobby of the House of Commons in favour of that measure of justice. I told you that in that great division on the second reading I had a remark made to me by an honourable friend of mine. He said we were then engaged in giving a vote that we should look back upon during our lives. That friend is before you, the honourable member for Knaresborough. Gentlemen, we were doing a great work ; we were, in the words of Mr. Gladstone, sending a message of peace to Ireland. I know it is now argued that that message of peace was a failure, because there are still disturbances. I deny it. It was no failure. It was a message of peace, and by that message we do abolish for ever a gross injustice and a crying injury to the large mass of the Irish people. To that extent we did justice to Ireland—to that extent we sweetened the political breath of the country and assuaged religious animosity ; but we never said that was everything that there was to do. It was only one thing—it was only one measure ; that it was not only the Church, but, we always said, there were other questions. We said that the land question was one which

would necessarily require attending to. Well, now, we have to deal with the land question. You recollect the Tories complained because we did not take the land question first. We said, "Wait, gentlemen, we will do both ; but one thing at once, if you please." If we had taken the land question, why, of course, they might have said we ought to have taken the Church first. We intend to take both, one after the other. We cannot drive all these things together, you know ; we must take one thing at once, and do that one thing well. I think we did the Irish Church well. Well, now, in Ireland the land is held under circumstances very different from what it is in England. The land in Ireland is held in possession, in a great measure, by the representatives of men who came into possession of the land in consequence of conquest and confiscation. In the days of the Tudors and the Stuarts we sent over armies from England to conquer Ireland. They conquered different parts of Ireland, and we dispossessed the owners of the soil, and placed in their stead an alien race—Englishmen of our own blood, but not men of the Irish blood ; men of our religion, but not men of their religion. Therefore the landowners in Ireland became an alien race—alien in blood and in religion to the cultivators of the soil ; and not only so, they possessed that great tract of country in many counties of Ireland by virtue of conquest, and dispossessed the legitimate owners of the soil. A serious injustice of that kind lasts for centuries—the tradition is carried from generation to generation. It might possibly have been forgotten, but the Government followed it up by penal law. They were not content with taking the land—they tried to crush the people by penal laws. They attempted to crush the native population of Ireland down to the lowest state of degradation. No Catholic could hold a foot of land ; no Catholic could bring up his sons in any position of public influence, because he was debarred from doing it ; he was debarred from even voting for members of Parliament, and he was debarred, as a matter of course, from representing the country in Parliament. In fact, everything was done to oppress the Catholics, and as a matter of course all this feeling against the alien race was aggravated, and that lasted up to the last century, and now there is no doubt that a very large amount of feeling exists, a feeling of antagonism between the owners of the soil and its cultivators, which does not exist in this country. But beyond that, it is the custom in this country for landowners, to a great extent, to make improvements in the farm buildings and other purposes of agriculture. In Ireland that is not the custom. If the farmer does it there he does it at his own risk, and he has no security against the landlord driving him off the soil, a circumstance which is by no means uncommon in Ireland, for great multitudes of those who cultivate the soil have been evicted or driven off their holdings, either at the behest of the landlord or in order to make room for people who wish to make certain improvements to which the parties were not agreeable. Practically, you can understand that the farmers holding their land on such a slender condition—the land being their only, or, at least, their principal means of subsistence—you can understand it is a matter of life or death to them. Therefore they feel, to a very great extent, the injustice of their being placed at the mercy of the landowners of Ireland. Now, the question

is, how are we to deal with that? How is it possible to give confidence to these people? Because, although you may say that only one landowner out of every twenty is a bad one and a cruel one, yet, when one man out of twenty sweeps away a number of his tenants, you will quite understand the effect of insecurity and alarm it would have throughout the country. I don't know what the provisions of the Government Bill will be, nor do I believe that my honourable friend here, Mr. Jacob Bright, knows what the provisions of the Bill will be. But I will tell you what it will be. I am sure it will be a wide and a moderate measure. It will be a measure calculated to encourage agriculture in Ireland and increase the confidence of the cultivators of the soil; and it will be a measure which, in the long run, will be to the advantage of the owners of property in Ireland, and to the advantage of the community at large. I say to the advantage of the owners of property in Ireland. Why, gentlemen, a measure of justice is always an advantage to everybody. Injustice is an advantage to nobody; selfishness always over-reaches itself. If you have a state of things which creates so large an amount of suspicion, uncertainty, dissatisfaction, and almost rebellion, you must have a state of things which must be prejudicial to the interests of the community at large. What do we do? We keep up in Ireland a very large police force of several thousand men, besides 30,000 soldiers, at an enormous expense. Who pays for all this? Every person in this room pays his share to the support of this great expense to keep down the Irish people. I say, if you cannot so carry on your legislation for the three kingdoms as to make Ireland as satisfied with your legislative enactments as Scotland it is a disgrace to your imperial legislature. I say, further than that, it is an injustice to the Irish people themselves and to those who have to bear this burden of taxation to support these repressive measures in Ireland; and if the landlords in Ireland choose to stand in the way of this measure of justice, I would say to them that they ought to pay the expense of those different agencies which are necessary to keep the order of the country. These men, I have no doubt, are the very origin of this dissatisfaction, these irregularities, and all this uneasiness, and even if they dare to oppose the measure which the Government is about to bring forward—but, as I said in reference to the Irish Church Bill, I believe they dare not do it—I believe that there is every prospect that the Government Land Bill will receive the assent and approval of the great majority of persons in this country, and that even the landowners themselves will see it is absolutely necessary they should not raise a factious opposition to a measure which is really an alternative between leaving them to the unsupported management of their own estates and property in Ireland or to the security which a measure of justice will afford them. I shall be quite prepared, as your representative, to give to Her Majesty's Government a very cordial support in reference to this Irish land question, for I consider that after the care and attention given to it, and having the confidence which I have in their judgment, I may very safely give them my earnest support, because I have no doubt whatever, after the great care given to the subject, they will bring forward a measure which the exigencies of the case and

the ends of justice require, and which, on a balance of advantages and disadvantages, will prove to be best under the circumstances of the case. It will not be necessary for me to go at any great length into the various matters of public interest which have been before Parliament and the country during the last session, but there are two or three which have passed to which I should like to call your attention, and to point out that, although the most important measure was the Irish Church Bill, yet the session was not barren in other respects. I may mention the Bankruptcy Law, a law very interesting to traders, and to which, individually, I may say, I gave great personal attention during the progress of that Bill in the House of Commons, and we were enabled to improve to a considerable extent the measure as brought forward by the Government; and I hope that Bankruptcy Law will be found to be in every respect a great improvement upon former measures of that character. I may mention the Endowed Schools Bill, which was brought forward by the Right Hon. the Vice-President of the Privy Council, Mr. Forster, the member for Bradford, a gentleman, who, during the past session, has distinguished himself in the subordinate work of the government. He brought forward the Endowed School Bill, which received the sanction of the House of Commons, and I hope it will secure a very much better application of the funds devoted to educational purposes in the country than has hitherto been the case. I hope it may sooner or later reach even those two stagnant public institutions in Warrington—I mean the Blue Coat School and the Grammar School—which seem to be carried on entirely in the interest of the Tory party, the trustees being selected, certainly not especially on account of or in regard to their personal qualifications and adaptability, but entirely in reference to their political opinions. I think those two institutions might be made of greater use to the inhabitants of the town if they were drawn from the narrow political Tory groove in which they have so long moved. There was another bill, in which I, as your representative, had the pleasure to assist in doing away with the work of the previous member for Warrington. I allude to the Assessed Rates Bill, in which we revived the Compound Householder, and I hope you are all perfectly satisfied, and that the pledge which I gave to you in the course of the canvass has been redeemed, and that so far as the Government and the Liberal party are concerned, we have done away with the injustice of the restrictions which were imposed by Mr. Disraeli's Bill on the exercise of the parliamentary franchise. There was also a bill passed in reference to the Municipal Franchise, which gave a very great increase of the suffrage to municipal voters, by allowing them to have a qualification after one year's residence in the place of three. To that bill, brought forward by my hon. friend, Mr. Hibbert, the member for Oldham, I had great pleasure in giving my earnest support, and I had the pleasure of supporting—in fact of seconding—an amendment proposed by my hon. friend Mr. Jacob Bright in a very able manner, and in a very impressive speech,—which had the effect of giving the municipal franchise to the fair sex. Well, now, we may as well be candid, for I see some friends there in the gallery who know all about it—I believe the ladies rather went

against us at the last municipal election. I suspect, if I may be allowed to say so, that it was just a deficiency of political education on the part of the fair sex that they went against us. And I am sure that with more political education the ladies will vote right at last. The ladies always do act right. However, I am sure that it is only a fair matter of justice that if ladies occupy property, pay rates, and fulfil all the duties and the requirements of ratepayers which fall upon male occupiers, it does seem to me an unreasonable thing that ladies should not have the power to vote for their representatives. But, gentlemen, if ladies have a right to vote for municipal representatives, you will see that they may very fairly claim to vote for parliamentary representatives. I don't think there can be any very strong argument urged to show the difference between the right to the parliamentary and the municipal suffrage. So far as I am concerned, it seems to me it is only logical that, if a woman is fit for the municipal franchise, she may also be given the parliamentary franchise; and I, for one, should be quite prepared to support the enfranchisement of women occupiers of property for Parliamentary purposes. I think there are many circumstances under which it is necessary they should have a voice in the settlement of the affairs and of the laws which press upon them in their various capacities. Gentlemen, another bill was passed to which also I had the pleasure of giving my support: it was the Trades Union Protection of Funds Bill. I had the pleasure of receiving a deputation from the trades unions of Warrington in reference to that matter before the election. I told them I thought it was most unfair and unjust that their funds should in any way be endangered in consequence of the action of the Combination Laws which had been passed some time previously, and which, in my opinion, as in theirs, pressed very unjustly and unfairly upon the trades unions. That Act of Parliament is now the law of the land. I had pleasure in supporting it, and I shall be quite prepared for a further and larger measure when the question of trades unions comes before Parliament. I shall be quite prepared to give it a very favourable and careful consideration, based upon this principle, viz., that I think the sellers of labour ought to be in no worse position than the sellers of manufactured goods. When any man has to sell his labour, he should be able to sell that labour and to make, along with other sellers of labour, such reasonable and proper arrangements as to the terms on which they will sell it as they may think fit; just as one who sells calico may, if he thinks fit, make arrangements with another seller of calico as to the terms upon which they will sell their calico. All I say is, that the law should not be applied to interfere with the seller of labour in a different way to that in which it would interfere with the seller of calico. I shall not enter into the details of many of the Acts which passed last session, but I may allude to a most important question—a question which, as a matter of course, has occupied considerable attention in the House of Commons and in the country; I mean the question of national expenditure; because I told you, when I stood on this platform, I considered it quite time that the extravagant expenditure of this country should be lessened. I said that if I went to Parliament I would do my utmost to reduce the expenditure of the

country. I recollect that, a year or two ago, Mr. Bernal Osborne said in the House of Commons that "both sides were tarred with the same brush." I am afraid they were tarred with the same brush. I believe that amongst the old Whigs there was as great a desire to dip into the pockets of the taxpayers as there was amongst the old Tories ; but still, after all, the Tories, I must say, were the worst of the two. When Lord Derby was a short time in power, in 1859, he increased the expenditure of this country £4,000,000 a year, and afterwards, when it had been greatly reduced, Lord Derby and Mr. Disraeli came in power, in 1867-8, and they increased the expenditure to the tune of £3,000,000 a year—without any reference to the Abyssinian war. I am not speaking of the cost of that war, but of the actual increase in the expenditure that Lord Derby and Mr. Disraeli were the means of imposing upon the taxpayers of this country. I recollect Mr. Gladstone, speaking from this platform, saying that the spending servants of the Crown were never asleep, but if the public went to sleep the spending servants of the Crown took advantage of the public, and increased the expenditure ; and he said also, what was quite true, that Lord Derby and Mr. Disraeli, amongst all those very wise and statesmanlike opinions, principles, and measures that they brought before the country, had one measure upon which they no doubt relied to produce very great public influence, and that wonderful measure was what Mr. Gladstone on this platform described as "making things pleasant all round." Gentlemen, £3,000,000 is rather a large sum when you think about it. It would do a great deal if properly distributed. These right hon. gentlemen and lords forming Her Majesty's Government under Lord Derby and Mr. Disraeli manipulated £3,000,000 in the course of a year. They thought they parted with it in a proper manner, and they expected that a grateful and admiring country would show its appreciation of their efforts in that direction by awarding an increased popularity for their wise and judicious expenditure of the public money. Mr. Gladstone raised an alarm from this platform. He challenged the then Tory government with having increased the expenditure £3,000,000 a year ; and although they tried to deny it, practically there was no getting over the fact, because they had undoubtedly increased the expenditure to that extent ; and Mr. Gladstone told us that, with the support of the country, he should be prepared, if he came into power, to reduce the national expenditure ; and, as for myself, I went into Parliament with the determination, as far as possible, to assist in reducing that expenditure ; and I may say that on the votes in supply, recollecting Mr. Gladstone's statement that the permanent servants of the Crown were continually pressing on the expenditure, I thought it right, whenever a fair opportunity offered, to vote in favour of a reduction of expenditure ; and in any of the Government votes I thought it right to vote in favour of the lower and against the higher expenditure. I believe that on almost every occasion I went into the same lobby with my honourable friend here on this platform. We went into the lobby against the Government, not that we were opposed to the Government, but, in fact, to assist the Government in cutting down the expenditure of the country. There was one vote, gentlemen, of a special character, upon which

I, as your representative, moved an amendment with a view to secure a reduction. I mean the vote for the Diplomatic and Consular Establishments. That vote costs us half a million of money, and, as a matter of course, it is right to enquire what did we get—what do we get for all this money? Well, my honourable friend's "big brother" once called the diplomatic expenditure "a gigantic system of outdoor relief," and I must say that, in deciding—after taking the advice of my friend here and other gentlemen in the House of Commons—in deciding to challenge that vote, I was influenced by the opinion and the judgment expressed in speeches which I have listened to, and from the many writings I have read with interest and instruction, of Cobden and Bright. I was guided by their instructions in the course that I took. Gentlemen, I challenged that vote, and I made a speech in the House of Commons. I am afraid some of my friends would say I had spoken too long, for I spoke about an hour and a quarter, and I was listened to with the greatest attention by the members of the House. That speech produced a very great impression in the House of Commons—a much greater impression than I had anticipated; and it produced a much greater impression out of doors than I had anticipated; and the result of the motion and the discussion which was carried on at the time, and in which some of the leading members of the House engaged, was a tie of our 66 against the Government's 66; and it was only by the casting vote of the chairman, who, however, sympathised with my motion, that the Government was saved from defeat. The chairman told me the next day that had he not been chairman he would have supported me. Gentlemen, I did not wish to defeat the Government, and the Government knew I did not wish to defeat them. I did not wish to embarrass them, and they were well aware of that. They knew that my object in bringing forward the motion was to reduce the expenditure and to lop off abuses which I thought were prevalent in this service. As some remark has been made to the effect that I was acting in antagonism to the Government, I may say that I have received in private, from members of the Cabinet and the Government, an expression of their full approval of, and concurrence in, the course I have taken. I believe already there has been a reduction made in the Foreign Office expenditure, and I believe there will be a considerable reduction of expenditure in the Foreign Office. My honourable friend, the Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Otway, in speaking with reference to the motion I had made, said that he justified the expenditure on our diplomatic service as being a very small expenditure, because, he said, it kept us at peace and from war. What! diplomacy keep us from war? Why, what is the fact? In the last 100 years the national debt of this country has increased from 100 millions to 800 millions of war debt, and during that 100 years there has been annually a very large amount of expenditure for war purposes in addition to that debt. Now, in Europe, notwithstanding all this diplomacy, with its peaceable influence, there are five millions of men in arms; and in England, this year, after the reductions of the present Government, we are spending £25,000,000 on our army and navy. We stand before the world, not as a peaceable country, but as one bristling all over with guns and bayonets; we stand armed at all points, challenging the world. We

are practically saying we are ready to dispute everything that clashes with our interest or our opinion. That is the result of diplomacy as a peaceable profession. I say we pay too much for that sort of peaceable profession, and if the half million be expended for peace purposes, I can only say it is very badly applied. I go further, and say that, so far from being a profession calculated to produce peace, it has been a profession which has involved us in wars which, but for it, we should have escaped. And during the last two generations, at all events, the Foreign Office and the Diplomatic Service together have been the means of carrying us into war. They carried us into the war of the French revolution, a war upon which we spent hundreds of millions of our treasure, and which cost us the blood of hundreds of thousands of our countrymen. And what have we gained for all this? Why, the solemn assertion, in the face of Europe, that no Buonaparte should ever sit upon the throne of France. That was a diplomatic triumph for all that expenditure! and, as a matter of fact, we have a Buonaparte on the throne of France at the present time. If I had time, I could show you that the Crimean war, which cost us upwards of £100,000,000, was a war brought on by diplomacy, and by the Foreign Office. It was a cruel and wicked war, and the Foreign Office is to be blamed for it. If the diplomatic representative in Turkey had acted in the interests of peace, we should have been saved a large amount of loss and suffering. I might also refer to the Abyssinian war just closed, and which costs us £9,000,000. This war originated from the fact of the Foreign Office having planted a consul in Abyssinia who entangled himself with local intrigue, which led to that enormous expense and great public excitement. All this arises from the system of intermeddling with the affairs of foreign nations, a system encouraged and fostered by the Foreign Office, and carried on by its diplomatic agents. If time permitted I could show you that, if the Foreign Office and diplomacy had had their way, we should have been involved in a great many wars we have been saved from, not by the Foreign Office, but by the good sense of the people of this country. I can tell you that Lord Palmerston, for forty years and more—particularly from 1840 to the time of his death—was a source of constant danger in Europe, and that his policy, impressed upon the Foreign Office and carried out by the diplomatists, was a policy calculated, so far from promoting peace, to involve this country in war. Had I time, which I have not, I could carry you through a number of circumstances, in relation to the diplomatic service of this country, which would show that from 1840 to the time of the Russian war we were continually in danger of a war with France, entirely in consequence of the unreasonable course pursued by the Foreign Office in connection with various matters which brought us into contact with France. Therefore I say that this claim that diplomacy promotes peace, and that we pay this half million as a kind of assurance against war—I say it is altogether a delusion and a sham. We get nothing of the sort; it is no such assurance. It has not had that effect. I know there is a great deal argued in favour of this expenditure. We know how we are represented abroad, and how our ambassadors and diplomatists in foreign capitals are housed in palaces and surrounded by all the luxuries of high state; and these people no

doubt find it very nice to give magnificent entertainments, in the shape of balls and dinners. No doubt there is a good deal in having a good dinner. It is considered by the aristocracy of this country that it is not a bad thing to have in every capital in Europe men placed to represent the Crown of England, and to dispense the hospitalities of England in a profuse and magnificent manner at the expense of—you, gentlemen. I fear that my opponents say I am very seldom right, but they will not, I am sure, say that I am wrong in this—that there is not a man in this room who will be invited to dinner at any of these embassies, or to a ball either, and I defy them to deny that there is a man in this room who does not pay towards the expenses of those balls and dinners. Then the question is, what do we get out of it? They say you get prestige, you get power; but what do we pay for it? The representatives of the United States of America, whose diplomacy is just as good as ours—I am not quite sure whether it is not better—their representative in France I don't believe has more than a fifth of the salary of our ambassador. The American ambassador does not pretend to give those grand parties and balls, and the ambassador in London has to do the thing for a good deal less than we should pay. But will any man say that because the American ambassador in France does not give grand parties and dinners, whilst the English ambassador does, that the power and influence of America are less than those of England? Does anyone suppose that the French Government will listen to the representative of the United States with less respect because he does not spend more money in France? Do you suppose that the French Emperor and his ministers are such fools as to think that because the representative of the United States only spends two or three thousand a year that America is less powerful than England because England spends ten thousand a year? The thing is absurd. My honourable friend, the Under-Secretary of the Foreign Department, talked as though I were in favour of putting up the offices of the State by a sort of auction to be knocked down to the highest bidder. He said that a briefless barrister would accept the office of Lord Chancellor for a thousand a year. I never said I would hand up these offices to the highest bidder. Sir Edward Bulwer, speaking in a similar strain, instanced the Archbishop of Canterbury at £15,000 a year as a sort of justification for paying £10,000 a year to our ambassadors at Paris. My opinion is that that argument does not prove that we are not paying too much to the ambassador at Paris. I think it proves we are paying a great deal too much to the Archbishop of Canterbury. I recollect in the House of Commons, during the debate on the diplomatic expenditure, I was sitting with my hon. friend, the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, as it happened, on the Opposition side of the House. We were accidentally together, and we were conversing and discussing this question, and he raised something of the same argument to me privately, and said, "You cannot get men of the capacity required to conduct the affairs of this country as representatives of Great Britain in foreign capitals unless you pay them at least £10,000 a year." Just opposite to us there was a man sitting with his head upon his hand, thoughtful and attentive, whilst the proceedings of the House were going on. I pointed across the House to

him, and said to Mr. Otway, "Do you see that man? You give that man five thousand a year." It was Mr. Gladstone. I said, "You get the highest intellect in the kingdom, mature judgment, the finest power, the greatest zeal, and almost heavenly impulse, and you pay him five thousand a year. Does he sell it to you for five thousand a year? You know it is worth infinitely more than five thousand a year to you. He takes this salary, it may be, to pay a portion of the expenses entailed upon him by his position. Do you mean to say that a man with the capacity to be ambassador in Paris is to be engaged at ten thousand a year when you get Mr. Gladstone at five?" Gentlemen, my opinion is that in reference to our foreign diplomacy there is one principle which we shall have to insist upon, and as her Majesty's Government have agreed to give me a select committee on the subject this next session, it is my intention to follow this matter up; and I say that if we are to have any great reform in the management of the foreign affairs of this country, we must act on the principle of elevating our commerce in relation to our foreign diplomacy into the position that it occupies in reference to our home politics. We have nothing to do with territorial or dynastic arrangements; but let it be known to the world that, so far as we are concerned, we will have free trade in commerce, and that we wish this country to become and remain the emporium of the labour of the world. Let us go to foreign countries with no selfish feelings. Don't let us assume the position which Lord Palmerston and the Foreign Office assumed for so many years, as being a second Providence ruling the affairs of mankind. Why, gentlemen, we cannot be a Providence, and I will tell you why. The greatest diplomatist or the greatest Foreign Secretary we ever had could not tell you what would happen to-morrow. That is the difficulty of being a Providence. You cannot be a Providence unless you can see what will happen to-morrow. We have been trying many years to arrange for certain eventualities, but those eventualities have never happened, whilst other eventualities about which we never dreamed have cropped up in spite of all our diplomacy, at the very times and the very places we never expected them. This is only one department. I have gone into it because I happen to have taken a prominent position with reference to it in the House of Commons; but, gentlemen, it is the same in all directions. The permanent officers of the crown are continually crying out, like the daughter of the horse leech, "give, give," and unless the public support the Government in its efforts to keep down expenditure, there will be great difficulty in dealing successfully with the question, for all those gentlemen connected with the public service who have to submit to a reduction in their salaries will make a great outcry, and the Government will, no doubt, make a good many enemies; and we must be prepared to support the Government against the outcry that will be raised against it by interested parties. There is great room for reduction, notwithstanding the reduction of 2½ millions made by the present Government during the past year. I recollect that in 1848, Mr. Cobden proposed to reduce the expenditure ten millions, because the expenditure in 1848 exceeded the expenditure of 1835 by that amount. Now we spend more by ten millions than we did when Mr. Cobden

said we ought to reduce the expenditure ten millions. Therefore I think we have a right to say that we must have at least a reduction of ten millions a year. And what will that ten millions save to you? I must turn to the ladies and say that with that reduction we can give you a free breakfast table. We could give you tea, sugar and coffee, without any duty, and at a much lower expenditure; and if I had time to go into this matter, which I have not to-night, I should be able to show that with a reduction of ten millions a year we should be able to abolish the duties on tea, coffee, and sugar, and add very materially to the comforts of the labouring classes of this country by providing them with these articles in greater abundance and at a much cheaper rate; and by increasing the consumption of these articles, it would lead to an increased foreign trade, while the cost of the army would be decreased, and the value of labour rise. In conclusion, I may advert to the question of opening the national universities to dissenters, and I wish to say I voted for Sir John Coleridge's Bill, although I must say I consider it was a very ineffective and insufficient measure. The House of Lords rejected it in a most ignominious manner, and it is fortunate they did so, because I hope we shall have a much wider and much more effectual measure, which I shall be most happy to support, and because I believe the national universities ought to be thrown open in their honours and emoluments to all classes of her Majesty's subjects. There is another question which made no progress during the session. It was brought forward by my venerable friend Mr. George Hadfield. I mean the bill in connection with parochial Burial grounds, the use of which at present is refused for the interment of dissenters by their own pastors. Now I think the interment of dissenters in parochial burial grounds ought to be allowed, with the ministration of dissenting ministers; and that all parochial burial grounds ought to be what they are in name—for the national use; and I shall be much pleased to support my friend, Mr. Hadfield, should he bring forward that Bill in this session; or, should it be taken up by anyone else in consequence of Mr. Hadfield's advancing age, I shall be happy to give my support to the Bill. With regard to the licensing system, it was a question to which I have given great attention. During the last session of Parliament, when the Beerhouse Bill was before the House of Commons, I was the means of introducing a certain clause which, I think, will have proved to be a public benefit. I feel most interested in the question, and will do all in my power to support a bill which will do something to stem one of the greatest evils that threatens this country. With reference to the Permissive Bill, you know I thought it right to vote for it, although you are equally well aware I don't think that it is the best mode of dealing with the question. My idea is, that a great evil of this kind can be met by limiting it, as far as possible; by lopping off all its evil influences; and by lessening the number of houses and the number of hours during which they are open. The Government, I understand, are preparing a Bill in reference to the licensing question. That Bill will, no doubt, deal with many of the points to which the consideration of Parliament has been directed. I may say, in respect to Sunday closing, I have, at the request of the Sunday Closing Association, to lay on the table of the House of Com-

mons a Bill, along with my hon. friend Mr. Birley, the Conservative member for Manchester, and Mr. Morgan, the member for Denbighshire. I shall, along with them, lay the Bill on the table of the House of Commons, with this understanding, that if we can, in reference to the Government Bill, secure satisfactory provisions with respect to Sunday closing, we shall not press the Bill I intend to lay before the House of Commons. I may say I had the honour of a letter from Mr. Gladstone the other day, in which he said the Government were giving very great care and attention to this question, and that he himself felt a strong personal interest in it, but that it was left in the hands, as you all know, of Mr. Bruce, the Home Secretary. I hope that the measure which will be brought forward will be such as, without perhaps fulfilling the extreme views of all parties, will be calculated to be of very great benefit for promoting the morality and temperance of this country. The only question I must now allude to in any detail is in reference to education. In reference to this question, I hope to see a very considerable measure of education passed either in this or the next session. My own feeling is decidedly in favour of a measure of education placed on a wide basis, so as to keep out the sectarian element as far as possible; that should as far as possible compel, by some means or other, those parents who are unwilling to do their duty to their children. I think also, in reference to those parents who are not able to provide the means for educating their children, that the Government should make such a provision. But, gentlemen, while I say this, I do not disguise from myself the difficulties of the question arising from the existence of a large number of schools established by voluntary contributions. Very large sums of money, many millions, have been raised by voluntary contributions during the past few years. But, as a matter of course, in a measure brought forward, regard will have to be paid to the interests of the schools so established. I trust some measure of a wise character will be attempted, which, while doing no injustice to individuals who have spent money and made exertions in the direction of education, will, on the other hand, not ignore and neglect the large masses of the community which are not connected with any denomination at all. I hope a measure will be framed in such a spirit that it may be accepted by all parties of the community as a fair and reasonable settlement of the question. I shall only say, in reference to the question of the ballot, that the circumstances of the last election, and the whole of the experiences we have had in other towns, lead me to entertain a stronger opinion every day in favour of the ballot. I do hope and believe we are not far from getting the ballot. There was, as you know, during the last session, an important commission sitting on Parliamentary and municipal elections. That commission made a report, and will sit next session. I hope that, as the result of their inquiries, we shall have a great reform in Parliamentary and municipal elections, and that there will be a great limitation to the operation of the drink, and that corruption, bribery, and intimidation will cease; and in the future, as in the past, I hope we shall act under the banner on which were inscribed by our political ancestors the words "Peace, Retrenchment, and Reform." Our forefathers struggled for their great principles

under great discouragement, obloquy, and sufferings. They were dogged by spies, their political conferences were denounced as conspiracies liable to fine and imprisonment, their political meetings were, as at Peterloo, dispersed by the sabres of a coarse yeomanry; but they went on, notwithstanding all this discouragement. They persisted in maintaining their principles. We have still, gentlemen, an equal work to perform. We have still to maintain those principles that they so worthily maintained. We have to support peace by insisting on the non-intervention of this country in foreign affairs, by not supporting the meddling policy of the Foreign Office, and by doing away with that state of armed offence which is at the present time existing. We have to go in for retrenchment at least to the extent of £10,000,000, and carry blessings to the labouring population of this country, and ease the burdens of the taxpayers. We have to go in for reform, because there are still many causes in all branches of the State which require a reform of abuses. Gentlemen, we are now under circumstances far more favourable than those of our forefathers. We are not exposed, in maintaining our principles, to the injury and persecution under which they suffered. We have glorious leaders at the head of the Government of this great country. We in Warrington did something at the last general election to aid the cause of progress. In the list of great disappointments among the other boroughs in this great county Warrington did its duty. Warrington, faithful among the few boroughs in Lancashire, and very distinct from the county votes, gave its voice in favour of a great measure of justice and reform. And while we have by great difficulty, and by a great effort rescued Warrington from Tory domination, we shall have to continue the work to maintain our position. I can tell you, gentlemen, I will try to do my part; I will do my share to the best of my ability. I will grudge no zeal, no labour, and no thought in fulfilment of the duties as your representative. Will you do your part? If we do—if we maintain in the county and the country our voice for freedom, we shall then do our part in this great struggle and the cause of progress, and just as we look back upon our political forefathers for the work they did in the struggles that they accomplished, and the blessings they handed down to us, so will our successors in future years look back upon us and thank us for our work, and recognise our labour and our success, and will honour our memory.

No. II.

*Annual Address to his Constituents in the Public Hall, Warrington,
December 10, 1870.*

Mr. Chairman and gentlemen,—I feel that it is a privilege that I am allowed, as your representative, to appear before so large and intelligent a body of my constituents in order to give an account of my proceedings in the House of Commons. I think it is a good custom for members of Parliament to appear before their constituents from year to year in order

to receive at their hands an expression of opinion as to the course of policy which those members pursue; and I wish to say that if any gentlemen are present who did not support me at the last election, I hope they will consider that I am equally giving my report to them as to my supporters, for although I am loyal to my own party, yet I am not forgetful of my duty as the representative of all the ratepayers of Warrington. And I wish also to say that, in my position as your member, I shall be happy at all times to give every attention in my power to the wishes and to the opinions of those of my constituents who may think it right to communicate with me, although they may not be amongst my supporters. I am most anxious that upon this occasion, and upon any future occasion, we should avoid, as far as possible, any remarks or any statements which might have the effect of evoking or exasperating political and personal feeling in this borough; and that we should postpone, as far as may be possible, any such disposition until the time comes when this borough may have to elect a new representative, when it may be quite proper for the respective political parties to discuss, with as great earnestness as they may think fit, the claims of those who may be candidates for their suffrages. I am in hopes, whatever may be the result of the next election for the borough of Warrington, that I may be in a position to give a good account of my stewardship up to the end of my period of your service. At all events, I can promise you this, that so long as I am member for Warrington I will not begrudge any time or zeal in your service. I have, as my friend the chairman has mentioned, during the last session of Parliament, devoted a far greater amount of labour to my public duties than ever I devoted to any private undertaking of my own; and I think you will consider the position to which my friend has alluded is not an unsatisfactory one, when I say that, out of the very large number of 244 divisions in the House of Commons last session, I was present at 223, and only absent at 21. My friend, the chairman, also alluded to the Diplomatic Committee, which was granted by the Government at my instance, and in which I have taken a very active and very prominent part during the last session, because, as my position was one of an opponent to the existing system of diplomatic and consular expenditure, I had to appear on the committee very much in the light of a prosecuting attorney, and to cross-examine the witnesses, who were for the most part in favour of the existing system, and indisposed to give any evidence that might tend to damage it. That committee sat for two days a week during the greater part of the session, and I attended all the meetings they held. A blue-book, containing the report of the proceedings of the committee, has now been published. It is a very large and bulky blue-book, containing all the questions, to the number of 5,280, put to the witnesses, and the answers to them. Amongst the witnesses are included some of the most influential gentlemen connected with the foreign department—past Foreign Secretaries of State, Lord Malmesbury, Lord Derby, the late lamented Lord Clarendon, and several distinguished Ambassadors and Foreign Ministers, who are at present engaged in the diplomatic service abroad. Out of the 5,280 questions put to the witnesses, I think I may safely say that I put 3,000 of them; and I venture to appeal to that blue-book to show that

the examination under which I secured these various witnesses has furnished an amount of valuable information, which I hope at some future time will bear fruit in a considerable reform of that very costly branch of the public service. Now, the great labour which we had in the House of Commons last session arose simply from the fact that the Government tried to do rather more than it was possible for the House of Commons to get through in the six months during which the House meets. I dare say you will recollect that before Parliament met, my right honourable and distinguished friend John Bright made the remark that it was impossible to drive six omnibuses abreast through Temple Bar at the same time, and he made it as a warning that it was desirable not to attempt to pass through the House of Commons too large a number of measures at the same time. But, notwithstanding that wise warning on the part of Mr. Bright, the Government—no doubt from a very great anxiety, and a very laudable anxiety, to promote as far as possible the public service—did promise, in her Majesty's speech from the throne, a very considerable bill of fare, which they hoped to get through during the parliamentary session. They unfortunately were not able to get through more than a portion of it, but there were two great measures which they did accomplish. One was the Irish Land Bill, and the other was the Education Bill. With reference to the former, I may say that I gave to her Majesty's Government my constant support, and voted for the Bill in every stage; and I did so because I considered that the Irish Land Bill was absolutely necessary. For you must remember that up to a recent period the occupiers of land in Ireland held their tenure under very uncertain circumstances, and in many districts large numbers of farmers were turned out of their holdings, and families were reduced to poverty, at the will and caprice of some landowner who did not regard their interest, or was careless of their future welfare. The effect of these evictions, which took place in some instances in a very cruel manner, was to create a very large amount of uncertainty in the tenure of land, the result of which was that many of the farmers in Ireland were afraid to devote money to the land in the employment of labour, in consequence of their fear lest they might be turned out of their holdings. Well, this Bill was to give them increased tenure, to give them holdings, and to give them security; and I for one am very glad, Mr. Chairman, that I had the privilege of voting for the Bill—a Bill which is likely to be so advantageous to the sister country. With regard to the Education Bill I shall not go into details. I voted in the main with the Government, but I was most anxious that the Education Bill should be so framed as to give freedom and fair play to all the religious denominations. I did not refuse to support those clauses which were in the interest of existing schools; but at the same time I am convinced that new schools supported by the public rates ought to be entirely of an unsectarian character. I should have been prepared to have gone still further than the Bill went, and I voted, in fact, for the amendment of my friend, Mr. Jacob Bright, the effect of which would have made the Bill, in my opinion, better than it is at the present time. But I think, on the whole, that the measure as it passed the House of Commons will be found to be of great advantage to the country at large. I hope it

will lead to a very great extension of the education of the people, and if it does that, we may be perfectly well satisfied that it is a good measure. If by experience we find that is desirable to still further modify the measure in the interests of non-sectarian education, I shall be quite prepared at any time to give my support in favour of any measure that may be brought forward with that view. I have alluded to two great measures which have been passed, and which I have not dwelt upon except very briefly; and, in consequence of the time which was occupied by these measures, several other very important measures, introduced or supported by Her Majesty's Government, were not carried. One of these was the University Tests Bill, the object of which was to open the universities to all classes of Her Majesty's subjects. I don't think that that measure went quite far enough; it was a good measure, therefore I supported it; but the House of Lords thought it consistent with their duty to prevent it passing during last session. But this University Tests Bill is only a small portion of a very great question, and that question is—whether the dissenters of this country are to be placed on full, fair, and equal terms with the members of the Episcopalian body? So far as I am concerned, I am quite prepared to support any measure the effect of which will be to put the other religious denominations of this country on an equal footing with the Established sect. The universities of this kingdom, which possess large means and large property, are national institutions, and they ought to be opened to all classes of Her Majesty's subjects, without any advantage to any particular class; and I hope to see the time when all the emoluments and all the honours of our great national universities shall be open to the members of other sects equally with the members of the Episcopalian body. Part of the same subject was the question of Bishops in the House of Lords. You are quite aware that the Bishops sit in the House of Lords as the representatives of the Established Church of this kingdom. My opinion is, if there is any good in bishops at all, it is when they are in their own dioceses. And in London, when I see a grand carriage, with footmen and coachmen in livery, driving through one of the parks, and see "lolling" in it some right reverend prelate, who, I know, occupies a great portion of his time in attendance in the city upon the debates in the House of Lords, or mixing in fashionable society, I think that kind of man does not carry out what I believe to be the proper idea of a bishop of the Church of England. I don't want to see the Bishops peers of the realm; I don't want to see those men great in personal estate and with large incomes—I think it will be quite sufficient if you give them an income to keep them in a position of respectability, and to enable them to perform their charitable offices as befits their position—but I want to see them labouring amongst the people, acting the part of overseers of the clergy in their respective dioceses, setting an example to the rest of the community of piety and self-denial; and then I believe that the Episcopalian Church might probably be more effectual in the great object of its existence than it is at the present time. In the interest of the Church of England and of Episcopalians, I voted for the exclusion of the Bishops from the House of Lords. There was also another question which the Government alluded to in the speech from

the Throne, which it was impossible for us to properly consider during the last session of Parliament ; and that was the reform of the licensing system. That, I know, is a subject which creates a very large amount of interest in this town as well as elsewhere, and, so far as I am concerned, I think this question should, in the interest of all parties, be fairly dealt with by her Majesty's Government. You are quite aware, I dare say, that the Government, after promising to bring in a licensing bill, were unable to do so, in consequence of the shortness of time and pressure of business ; but two or three occasions occurred in which there were debates and divisions upon questions relating to that subject. And amongst other questions my friend, Sir Wilfrid Lawson, brought in the Permissive Bill. Now, I have always said—I said last year, and I repeat it here again—that I cannot go fully with the advocates of the Permissive Bill, although I agree with them in its great principles. In relation to public-houses in any locality, I think that the ratepayers ought to have a voice in the granting of licences. That seems to me to be the principle which lies at the root of the Permissive Bill, and I hope to see, in any bill which her Majesty's Government may bring into Parliament, that they will provide that there shall be Licensing Boards which will have the power to grant or refuse licences—such Boards not to consist of magistrates, but of the elected representatives—or, at all events, to a great extent, of the elected representatives—of the ratepayers. My own feeling is that, without going to the extent of the Permissive Bill, it is exceedingly important that we should limit the hours and lessen the number of the houses of this character. I believe, if that were effected, the houses that remained would be more respectably conducted ; and if the hours were shortened it would not in any way affect disadvantageously the more respectable members of the trade. On the other hand, it would withdraw temptation from a number of people who, unfortunately, when the temptation is offered, are apt to take too much—more, a great deal, than is good for them. I shall be quite prepared, when the question comes before the House of Commons next year, to consider it with the greatest care. I don't want to look at it simply from one point of view ; I wish to look at it from every aspect, with the view to promote, as far as possible, the general interest of the people. Now, gentlemen, I have referred to a few of the measures which occupied Parliament last session ; but there is always a great measure every session, in which you are all deeply interested. I allude to the Budget. You know perfectly well that on a particular night every year the Chancellor of the Exchequer brings forward what is called the Budget. The Budget simply means a statement of what he expects to spend during the year then ensuing, and how he expects to raise the money. That seems to me to be a very interesting subject, and to that subject I wish to call your attention for a short time. The national expenditure is a matter that affects all of you, for the national expenditure is always going on increasing. Now and then, for two or three years, you have a diminution, but then it seems like the approaching tide, which is gradually rising ; one wave succeeds another, and although it seems to go back for a short time, yet, in the end, you will find that the average expenditure of this coun-

try is going on increasing. The reason of it is this : There are lots of people whose interest it is to make the expenditure increase, because they put lots of it into their pockets. I recollect that when the present Prime Minister, the Right Hon. William Ewart Gladstone, stood upon this platform at the time of the contest which we had in South-west Lancashire two years ago, he made this remark about the spending servants of the Crown : " I will tell you this, that no Government, however well disposed, will at any time be able to keep the expenditure of the country within moderate bounds unless it is supported by the constant vigilance of public opinion. You will ask me, perhaps, why is this ? I will tell you in a sentence. It is because individuals, and knots and groups, and even classes of men, have a constant, quick, un-sleeping interest in feeding themselves upon the produce of the public industry. The natural counterpoise of that perfectly natural tendency on the part of individuals and classes is in the vigilance of the public mind. But if the public go to sleep, the other power, gentlemen, never goes to sleep. On the contrary, it watches for its opportunity. There is not a single description of person interested in the produce of the taxes who is not very naturally awake to consider what opportunities he may have of improving his position." Improving his position ! How ? By getting more money ! And that money comes out of your pockets. That is the battle that we, as the taxpayers of this country, have to fight ; against what is a very considerable and large army—the spending servants of the Crown. To show you that this description of Mr. Gladstone's is quite justified by facts, I may mention that in 1840, just a generation ago, the total gross expenditure of this country was $53\frac{1}{2}$ millions ; last year it was $68\frac{3}{4}$ millions ; so that in 30 years the expenditure of this country has increased $15\frac{1}{2}$ millions. Now, when I say $68\frac{3}{4}$ millions, or, in round numbers, 69 millions of money, I may tell you a matter which is very interesting to you, namely, that for every million of money we spend in London, you in Warrington contribute £1,000, so that the taxes paid by the people of Warrington for this 69 millions of expenditure amount to £69,000 a year, the whole of which comes out of the pockets of the inhabitants of the borough. I have said that the absolute expenditure had increased $15\frac{1}{2}$ millions since 1840, but the case is still worse than that, because in 1840 the national debt was greater than it is now. The amount we then paid for interest on the national debt was $29\frac{1}{2}$ millions ; last year we only paid 27 millions, so that we paid 2½ millions less for the interest of the national debt last year than we did 30 years ago ; and that, added to the $15\frac{1}{2}$ millions which I have just mentioned, shows that we are now paying for the general services of the country 18 millions a year more than we were spending 30 years ago. I wish you to understand that it is impossible for the Government of this country to pay this 18 million pounds sterling more than they did in 1840 without laying a tax upon you and upon the other inhabitants of this kingdom, in order to pay this expenditure. I find that in 1840 the average amount paid by each person in the United Kingdom—that is to say, for every man, woman, and child—was £1 15s. 9d. per head per year ; in 1870 the average amount per head paid by every man, woman and child was

£2 9s. 3d. That leaves an increase of 13s. 6d. per head per annum which we are now paying more than we were 30 years ago. It is very easy for any one to calculate what that means. Supposing you have a family of five—that is to say, a man, wife, and three children—many families are more than five, but that is often taken as an average—the average amount paid in taxes by such a family will be £12 6s. 3d. a year, or £3 7s. 6d. a year more than such a family would have paid 30 years ago. Now I think that this is a question which is worth the consideration of the working men of this country. The money really comes out of your pockets—that is a fact ; and although you may not very often be aware of the way in which it is taken from you, because it is often taken by indirect taxation which escapes your notice, yet you may rely upon this, that the taxes of this country have not been levied with a view to further the interests of the working-class and to save the pockets of the poor ; they have not been levied with a view to impose upon the rich an excessive amount of taxation, and a smaller amount of taxation on the poor ; on the contrary, although—thanks to the Liberal party—we have improved this matter very much during the last 20 years, even now the taxation of this country presses more severely and more heavily upon the working-classes than it does upon the owners of property. Of this 69 millions of money raised last year, the customs' duties which are imposed upon our tea, sugar, coffee, tobacco, spirits, etc., amounted to 21½ millions ; the excise duties upon malt, spirits, etc., amounted to 21¾ millions ; so that the customs and excise duties, which are to a very large extent paid by the working classes of this country, raised in taxes 43¼ millions of money during last year ; and you may calculate how much of that will be paid by the working classes of this kingdom. Some of the other taxes are paid exclusively by property. Property tax, for instance, is paid by property. Certain other taxes are also paid by property, but often, in the other taxes, certain portions of them are paid by the working-classes, and I think that, on the whole, we may fairly assume that the working-classes of this country pay a very large portion of the total taxation which is levied upon the nation. Now, in the House of Commons there has been an expression uttered by some Tory squires that land is over taxed, and that labour and industry are not taxed sufficiently in comparison with land. I want them to go into that matter ; I want them to try that question, and some day or other I dare say we shall try it, when I believe it will be shown that so far from the taxation of this country being in the interest of the working-classes, it is really in the interest of the landed proprietors of the kingdom, who pay a much smaller amount of taxation in proportion to their wealth, and in proportion to the object they have in the protection of that wealth, than the working-classes do. For my own part, I am so convinced of that matter, that I am determined, so far as I can, as your representative, to vote for the reduction, and for the abolition of all taxation that presses upon the necessities and luxuries of life consumed by the working-classes of this country. I shall be prepared to support any measure, the effect of which will bring us to that period when we shall have a free breakfast table. I believe it would be a very good thing for all of us if these custom duties upon sugar, tea, and coffee were entirely abolished,

because not only would you have a considerable advantage in the cost of these necessary articles of life, but you would also, by a greater consumption of them, have to purchase those articles sent from abroad by the products of your industry, and so the foreign trade of this country would be increased, the demand for labour increased, the wages for labour would be therefore advanced, and the working-classes, by getting rid of these import duties upon the prime necessities of life, would not only have the great advantage of a free breakfast table, but also have a very great advantage arising from the increased commerce of the country. If we are to get rid of these duties, we must reduce the expenditure, for if you do spend money, you must raise the taxes to pay for it ; and therefore I say it is a most important consideration how far we may be able to reduce the expenditure. I find, on looking at the expenditure, that it ranges itself under three great heads. There is the expenditure for the civil service, the expenditure for the army, and the expenditure for the navy. The expenditure for the civil service, the cost of collecting the revenue, has increased very rapidly indeed. It has increased from £9,000,000 in 1840 to £17,250,000 in 1870, so that the civil service charges account is nearly double what it was thirty years ago. Now, it is quite true that a certain number of these charges have been taken off local rates ; but it is also true that amongst these several votes there is, in my opinion, a very large exhibition of that feeling described by Mr. Gladstone, which permits men who have to spend the public money to put as much as they can into their own pockets. I certainly gave very great attention to the civil service question during the past session of Parliament. I was very careful to attend on every occasion when the House was in Committee of Supply, and to criticise the votes which were brought before us in relation to the various branches of the expenditure. With regard to the diplomatic and consular service, I was able to secure some reduction ; and I have reason to believe that, by the course I have taken in relation to that question, an increase in the expenditure has been prevented, and that a further decrease will be secured in the course of the next year or two. I can tell you that, as regards that particular branch of the civil expenditure, which amounts to something like half a million a year, I have no hesitation in saying that a very large amount of it is spent without the slightest possible advantage to the people of this country. In many cases it is a positive disadvantage to the country, to have people abroad, not for the good or for the advantage of the main body of the community, but interfering and intermeddling in foreign affairs, which often leads to difficulties, not unfrequently to quarrels, and, in some cases, to war. I believe they are not only useless but prejudicial, and that this gigantic system is kept up, as Mr. Bright described it, as a great system of out-door relief for the younger members of the aristocracy. I may also mention that, among other subjects that attracted my attention, and upon which I spoke in the House of Commons, were the excessive charges made by the law officers of the Crown and the people connected with the legal departments of the State. I feel there is a very large amount of plunder which is taken out of the public pockets for those services, and I hope that we may, by attracting the attention of the House of Commons to

charges of this character, secure a reform. With regard to the superannuations and pensions, you will scarcely credit me when I tell you we pay something like one million a year to this fund. I objected to it in the House of Commons, and I know that some friends of mine in Warrington—some of the letter carriers—were afraid I was speaking against their interest. My object is to pay those who do work, and to pay them well. I should be very glad to see a great number of the actual working servants of the Crown better paid, for the people with whom I quarrel are the people who do nothing and get large sums of money for it. We have in our public offices a large number of clerks—a much larger number than can be profitably employed—and these clerks are paid salaries very much in excess of the salaries paid to similar persons in banking or commercial offices; and when they have reached a certain age, having been paid all their lifetime a much higher salary than the servants we have, they retire upon large pensions. I do not hesitate to say that, in almost every case, you can get men at a lower salary, and still pay them well, to do a great amount of the public work which is done in these offices by gentlemen who expect to get a very good income for little work, and who, in the end, retire upon comfortable provisions at the expense of the public purse. I will tell you a circumstance which came to my knowledge when I was investigating this matter. I found that, a short time after the Reformed Parliament of 1832 met, an Act of Parliament was passed for the purpose of deducting from the salaries of the public officers a certain sum of money, to go towards the superannuation fund. All salaries of £100 a year and under were to pay $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., and above £100, 5 per cent., and these moneys were carried from year to year to the credit of the superannuation fund account. That went on for about twelve years, and then I found it dropped. There has been no reduction in the salaries of the civil servants of the Crown since that time; they had ceased to make any payment to their superannuation account. I then found that the House of Commons of 1852 had actually passed an Act of Parliament repealing the former Act; and these gentlemen, who now receive their full salaries without any reduction, retire, when 60 years of age, on large pensions, granted at your expense. I think that system is a most unreasonable and unfair system. I say that this money comes out of the pockets of those who work, and the Government of this country has no right to give larger salaries than the labour they require will fairly purchase, and has no right, in addition to those salaries, to give large pensions, which present such a very great charge upon the nation. Now, there is a subject connected with these civil charges to which my attention has been called by two of my constituents. It is in respect to the grants made out of the civil expenditure—of sums of money paid to the members of the Royal Family, and I am asked what my opinion is on the matter. I am told that a considerable number of the working men take an interest in the question, in view of the approaching marriage of the Princess Louise. Now, I wish to say that I entirely object to this class of payments. Last session, in connection with some expenses which had been gone to on account of the Prince of Wales and Prince Alfred, I raised the question in the House of Commons, and objected to it being placed upon the

estimates. With regard to the Princesses, I am glad that the Princess Louise is about to be married to the son of a subject of her Majesty. I think it is far better, in every point of view, that the members of the Royal Family should ally themselves with the aristocracy of the country, than be married to the junior members of royal houses of Germany. I do not think that the marriages which have already taken place with foreign princes have been, by any means, satisfactory. At all events, I consider it would be a great deal better that the princes and princesses of the royal blood in England should marry amongst her Majesty's subjects. Therefore, if the Government do propose a grant on account of the Princess Louise—and I shall be very glad if I find they do not, for I should be rather sorry to see objections against the grant come, in the first instance, where a daughter of her Majesty was about to marry the son of a peer of Great Britain—I shall be prepared to do what I think to be my duty. If the objections had been raised in one of the former marriages I should have been very much pleased. All I can say with reference to this class of charges is, that I am fully alive to them, and whenever I see a proper and fitting opportunity to oppose any expenditure of this kind for royal objects, you may rely upon it that my vote and my voice will not be absent. If the civil service require so much attention in consequence of their increases, I can tell you the army and navy also require a constant supervision, because you have, connected with those services, a large number of influential people who are continually adopting every method in their power to increase the expenditure. In the year 1840 the army cost $8\frac{1}{2}$ millions and the navy $5\frac{1}{2}$ millions, making a total of 14 millions for the two services. In 1870 the army cost $13\frac{1}{2}$ millions and the navy $9\frac{3}{4}$ millions, or a total of $23\frac{3}{4}$ millions, being an increase of $9\frac{3}{4}$ millions sterling in the absolute cost of the army and navy over what it was thirty years ago. That is proved ; and, from my own experience, I am asserting a fact—that the military and naval officers in the House of Commons form a very important part of that body. I believe that one-third of the members of the House of Commons are members of the military and naval forces, and a great number of other members have cousins, sons, nephews, or some other connection in these services. Their object is always to elevate the principle of war above the principle of industry. It is the old feudal principle. Time was, when our forefathers lived in this country, that the only men who were thought to be worthy of respect and consideration were men who buckled on their swords, and were men of war ; and every one of our forefathers who was engaged in industry in any capacity was looked down upon as nothing more than a serf. They were not regarded in any way as fit to be even mentioned, in comparison with those knightly barons who thought the principle a right one that they should take whatever they had the power to seize upon. This principle has fortunately, in the advance of civilisation, been to a great extent modified ; and it is now the case that industry is looked upon with respect. Men, because they labour, are not looked down upon as being the degraded of the earth, but they can stand upright and feel that they *are* men, not under the dictation and control of mere feudal superiors. But these military and naval men want, as far as

they can, to go back to that state of things. They want us to think less of industry and commerce, and more of war ; they want us to believe that the glory and *prestige* of this country depend upon our being able to fight ; not upon industry, not upon happiness, not upon prosperity, and not upon goodness. All these things are of smaller account to these military and naval men. They want to elevate the military services and the idea of physical force ; and therefore they are continually crying out for the increase of the army and navy. Whenever we have a war, as a matter of course we spend large sums of money upon it, and when the war has ceased we do not get rid of our additional ships or men. Our general expenditure is increased by some millions a year, and that amount is maintained. When there is no war there is always a panic. Periodically these men get up panics ; nothing can occur abroad without them turning it into a cause for a panic. You would have supposed that France and Prussia, six months ago, were armed to the teeth, and might have attacked us, according to the theory of these panic mongers. You would have supposed, when these great military countries could bring into the field three quarters of a million of men, that that was the time to be afraid lest one or the other should attack us. But the opportunity did not occur, and therefore we were not called upon to be very greatly afraid just at that particular time. Five months ago, however, there was a declaration of war. France declared war against Prussia, and these two mighty nations were grappling each other's throat, and were occupied with quite as much as they could manage to do. They have kept at this pretty closely, and it was seen five months ago that they would do so. But it was then that a panic was got up in the House of Commons, and it was said that, whilst at war with one another, the combatants might very likely do something that would create a war with us. It struck me to be the most incredible absurdity that reasonable men should talk in that way, and if I had not known these men had their interests in getting up these panics I should have been unable to account for it. But one member got up in the House of Commons after another, bullied the Government, and asked them what they were doing to defend the coast, to maintain the army, the navy, the stores, and the various appurtenances, as if we had been in a state of positive invasion, and I am sorry to say that the crying out of these gentlemen on both sides of the House of Commons, and the outcry that was also made by some of the newspapers, induced the Government to yield, and they came down to the House and asked for a grant of two millions of money—for a grant of as much money as they have saved in two years ; so that the saving we hoped might have gone to the reduction of taxation was swept away in this absurd panic. I may be thought to be ridiculous, but I was one of the seven men in the House of Commons who voted against it. I did not hesitate to vote against it, because I thought it was a foolish expenditure. I knew I was exposing myself to a great deal of obloquy, and I know I have been charged, as much better men have been charged, with being in favour of peace at any price—with being prepared to sink the character and independence of my country. I was so charged, both in the House of Commons and out of it, and

people thought it was a good joke to say that we were the seven wise men. But, mark you : if we had been able to carry out our object we should have saved a very considerable amount of money which is now wasted. We are always meeting with this war outcry for increasing expenditure. These gentlemen seem to think that if we spend a large sum of money we are safe ; but I entirely object to that doctrine. I say we spend too much money already, and the money we spend is spent badly. You will observe that these very men who are crying out for increased expenditure always say that our war forces are badly organised ; they would not be of the slightest advantage, or, at the least, be very easily conquered. They are badly organised : but who organises them ? We don't ; we pay for them. Who is it ? I will tell you what I should do in any of my manufactories if I found that the whole thing was going wrong, and that the machinery would not work. I should turn off my manager. I am prepared to take that course, and I say it, inasmuch as we have a manager in the person of a man who is notoriously incompetent, and inasmuch as we have a general field-marshal commanding in chief, whom, if we went to war, we should not venture to trust to command. He is placed in that position simply because he happens to be a royal duke, and I am prepared to move that manager. I think the whole thing is badly managed, and that our expenditure is extravagant, as the charges at head quarters—the administration charges—amount to a very large sum of money. As to our officers, why, the fact is, they are notoriously incompetent and inefficient. A man is not promoted in the army because he is efficient ; he is promoted because he has a long purse. We have an army so arranged that, if a man goes into it and shows every ability that he can possess as a soldier, and every attention to his duties, that ability and this attention to duty will not secure his advancement, and certainly would never promote him from being a sergeant-major into an ensigncy or lieutenantancy. If a man has a commission and shows himself equally determined to do his duty, he may have his step of promotion bought over his head. I have heard of cases where men have had their promotion bought over their heads for fifteen or twenty times, by junior officers who were paying no attention to their duties, when these old lieutenants had been for years actively engaged in the fulfilment of their business. I want to see an army officered by men who are expected to do their duty ; and I want to see the whole organisation of the army so managed that it shall be, for purposes of defence, an impregnable line—a second line of defence to the impregnable line which we have on the part of our navy. But we are told by these men that, notwithstanding our great and increasing expenditure, our army and navy are utterly inefficient. I retort upon them when I say we expend far more per man than any other nation in the world. We have an army badly officered, because we have an army in which promotion does not depend upon merit and efficiency. If we are brought into contact with any foreign force, I believe our men will fight like lions ; but it will be said, as it was said in the Crimean war, that they were led by asses, and there will be disasters in any future campaign, such as existed in the war of 1855-56. When they talk about an increase in the army what does it mean ? It means that we ought to have an extra 30,000 or 40,000 men,

and what for?—not for the defence of our hearths and homes, but to send them over to Belgium, if Belgium were attacked ; not to fight for you, but to fight for some foreign country, as if these 30,000 or 40,000 men could affect the current of things on the continent. Are not these men blind, that they cannot see that in the war now raging, where nearly a million of men have been enlisted on each side, and where in one battle-field the number of slain and wounded amounts to thousands, that any 30,000 or 40,000 men sent over from England would be but a mere bagatelle, and could not affect the conduct of affairs on the Continent? They do not suppose this at all, but it is a part of their policy. They simply say that in order to give an excuse for increasing the army, although they must know it is utterly impossible, in our insular position, for us to make any great effect in a continental struggle in which so many are engaged. But they say we must have the Prussian system, and that is, that every man must be a soldier. Your sons must be taken from their daily toil, and you, as a last resort, must be seized hold upon in the grasp of the military in order that you may be compelled to fight. If for the sake of glory and *prestige* it is necessary that we should give up our peaceful occupations to be more or less tinctured with the military spirit, I think the advantage is not worth the cost. I think that you, the working men, at all events, have a right to say it is not worth the cost that you should send your sons from 18 to 25 into the ranks of the army, to neglect their instruction in business, and which will probably render them less efficient for earning their daily food in future years. What have you, the working men, to do? You have to protect your labour against those who wish to interfere with it. Let me tell you there is something that may be interfered with, supposing this country were conquered, which I do not think is likely. Land might be interfered with, realised property might be interfered with, but if labour was of little value in this country you could take it away to another land. You could not take land away, however ; you could not take realised property ; and, therefore, I say that land and realised property ought to bear the expense of its own protection. If that principle were insisted upon—if all the money which was necessary for the army and navy were raised upon land and realised property, and not upon labour and industry, I think some of those men would begin to see it was not necessary to spend quite so much money. I believe it has been said by many of the Tories that the Government have been niggardly, and have starved the service ; that they have not given the service sufficient food and provision for clothing and other stores, which it is necessary the Government should provide. It so happens, in the navy, that the First Lord of the Admiralty and the Secretary have been overhauling this state of matters in connection with the stores of that service. I should be very glad if a similar thing were done with the army. I will give you some information of the statistics taken at the beginning of this year with reference to the stores of the navy. The Admiralty found they had in stock, at the beginning of the year, essence of beef to last $7\frac{1}{2}$ years ; it was bought at a shilling a pound, and is now only worth from threepence to fourpence. That is starving, indeed ! They had pickles provided for four years' consumption ; they had white

wines for 6½ years' consumption ; they had saloon candles for 10 years' consumption, and they had foot pieces for stockings—I am not exactly sure what these are, but I suppose they are things to keep people very warm in the legs; at all events, I have no doubt the people who supplied them were kept pretty warm, because they actually found these foot pieces for stockings in sufficient stock for 50 years' consumption. They had prepared soup for four years; blue cloth for trousers for seven years; jackets for 12 years; comforters for 3½ years; striped shirting for five years; and towelling for seven years' consumption. They have paid all this money out of your taxes, but that they had any such quantities nobody connected with the Admiralty knew, and it was only by dint of private inquiry that it was possible to find out where all this great mass of material had been stowed away. I myself heard there was a great stock of anchors, and in the House of Commons I put the question to my honourable friend, Mr. Baxter, the secretary of the Admiralty, whether it was a fact that they had more anchors than they required, and his reply was that they had no fewer than 639 at the dockyards, which were reported to be obsolete and unserviceable, which had been lying in the way there from thirty to fifty years, and which would have to be sold for old iron. He also said there were 341 others condemned as being unsuitable; and, in addition to that, there were hundreds of anchors scattered over the world at various stations which were unserviceable. He mentioned 144 at the Cape of Good Hope, and 200 at Hong Kong. You will see that the effect of all this is, that the people in power—these spending servants of the Crown—not only charge you a great deal for doing their work, but do it poorly. It is a perfect disgrace to the department that they should have purchased such a large quantity of materials which are either useless, or, in the course of years, become useless, while many of these things are destroyed, as a matter of course, by being kept too long. My own impression is, if the army were overhauled in the same way as the navy department, it would be found there was a large excess of stores, indeed, of almost every description. If we are to keep down these expenses of the army and navy, you must be determined to assert the principle of non-intervention with foreign Powers. You cannot do two things; you cannot keep down our army and navy if you will intermeddle with everything going on in the Continent; you can keep it down if you are content to mind your own business without minding that of other people. What have we gained by the principle of intervention in foreign affairs? You know that from the end of the last century up to 1815 this country was at war with almost the whole of Europe. It was supposed at the time that we were, as a nation, fulfilling a very great work; that we were doing our duty to Europe, and, perhaps, to the universe; and the duty we had to perform was, to prevent the great Buonaparte being crowned Emperor of France. We wished to prevent Buonaparte ruling over the kingdom of France in the place of the former king, who was an old Bourbon, and I believe (and there is no doubt now whatever) that the fact that we went into the field against the French Revolution at the beginning of this century, and at the end of last, really led ultimately to the existence of France as a great military Power, and as the conqueror of a large part of the

Continent. But whether it was so or not, one thing is quite certain—that at the end of the war we had spent about one thousand millions sterling, and hundreds of thousands of our fellow-countrymen had been destroyed. Now, just consider what a thousand millions sterling means ; indeed, you can't consider, if you try to realise it. None of us can realise it, and yet that great mass of wealth was taken from this country, of which a large portion was borrowed, and for which we still continue to pay, in hard-earned taxes, every year, a certain sum as interest. What did we get in return ? True, we settled Europe ; we settled the question that a Buonaparte should never reign in France ; we settled to what countries certain parts of Europe should belong, and we laid it all down with the greatest nicety, as if we were determining the affairs of Europe for ever. In fact, it was so stated in the treaty—which is all gone now, and it is only 55 years since it was signed ! We had a Buonaparte on the throne of France—Louis Napoleon became Emperor of France ; and our Government, representing the people, after it had spent a thousand millions to prevent a Buonaparte ascending the throne of France, was one of the first to recognise him ! I do not complain of that ; it shows the folly of our having gone into that war for fifteen years, when the result of it, in 55 years, was entirely done away with. The whole of the continent of Europe is entirely altered since that treaty, but there have been alterations, sometimes by Russia, sometimes by Austria, and sometimes by Germany ; and always, with the exception of two or three cases, with the concurrence of England. Don't you think that ought to teach us it is a very foolish thing to intermeddle and go to war for objects of this kind, of no good to us ? We spent 100 millions with Russia to defend Turkey, and now we are told we are liable to have a war again with Russia. If it were so, the sum of money expended fifteen years ago will be entirely lost. If we could but lay down as a rule—as the Americans do—that so far as our own interest is concerned we would defend it, but that we would not interfere with other people's interests ; while if other people chose to fight, and would not listen to the advice we might give them to be peaceable and to conduct themselves properly, we would decline to interfere and rush in between them to set them right ! If this country would but adopt this rule it would be found that, so far from losing *prestige*, we should gain strength, and throughout the world it would be known that we were powerful for defence, and that we sought to do no injury to any other country. So far from being attacked, it would be felt that any nation who attacked us would not have a chance of success ; and, so far from having any disposition to attack us, they would feel that as we, in all our public policy, did not seek to do any injury or interfere with other nations, they had no object in interfering with ours. That seems to me to be a proper policy. Gentlemen, we have a sad spectacle in Europe. Two great nations are engaged in a frightful war. I do not wish to pronounce any opinion upon that war except this—that I should like it to come to an end. I should like to see these two great nations sheath the sword, and that the terms of peace might be such as not to be humiliating to France, and, therefore, cause a future war. I think our Government has done perfectly right in not interfering in that

quarrel, but simply acting the part of mediators, and offering their good offices when they had a chance of having their counsels of peace listened to. I wish to remind you of this great lesson. We can see now, and it is said on every hand, that France has destroyed herself in the pursuit of glory. Just look back six months ago. At that time France was the dominant power of the Continent ; the Emperor was, perhaps, the most potent sovereign in Europe ; and his views were listened to by every king and every power. Glory might then be said to have reached its very climax, but the Emperor and the people stepped a little too far in its pursuit, and now they have sunk—the Emperor has sunk so low that no man will do him reverence, and that great people has fallen so much that millions of the population are suffering sorrows, losses, agonies, and destitution, which have scarcely been exemplified in the history of mankind. The people in England can see these things which have been caused by the pursuit of the French after glory, but they do not hesitate to say that we must enter upon a similar career to support our *prestige*. Our *prestige* is only another name for glory, and I do verily believe, if the policy of those people is carried out ; if we are to continue to mix ourselves up in foreign affairs ; if we are to be engaged in some great war on the Continent, which may perhaps lead to some difficulty with that great country on the other side of the Atlantic—our brothers with whom we ought to be constantly in the closest amity ; if anything of that kind occurred, I believe, just as England alongside France in centuries past has been to a great extent the disturber of Europe, the one in the pursuit of glory and the other of *prestige*, we shall very likely have to keep France company in her downward course of great degradation. I hope it will not keep so ; I don't believe it will be so, because I feel quite certain that the intelligence of this country will not allow itself to be duped and bamboozled by a number of men who are not interested in the general welfare, but only anxious to promote the welfare of a class. I trust, now that we have got household suffrage, and the working classes of this country have not only a voice in affairs, but also a vote, that they will vote for their own interest, and remember what war means. Whatever it means to others, it means a great loss to them. We cannot have war without our ships, travelling as they do over every sea in the world, being interfered with by foreign vessels of war ; they would interrupt our commerce, and perhaps destroy our commercial prosperity and activity. We cannot have war without, by means such as that, the demand for labour and operatives in this country being lessened ; and therefore, in consequence of the value of labour falling, we lower the wages. You, in a state of war, would have higher rates of food, and not only would there be less employment and higher expenditure to meet, but you would have greater taxes to pay, and you would have something beyond all that. You are now in a period of progress and prosperity. I trust that we are only at the commencement of a period when the working classes of this country will be an example to the other nations of the world in social and political elevation. All that will go when we are in time of war : then every high motive is lost sight of ; men cease to be progressive, and they become mere creatures under the influence of passion, or under the influence of

some feeling which tends to degrade them. I hope we shall not have war; and, so far as I am concerned as your representative, in your interest, gentlemen, my object is this: that I shall oppose military feeling, which is a feeling of interference with those abroad, and I shall seek to protect your pockets and your taxes, which are for the payment of objects in which you have no permanent interest; and shall do my utmost, in my humble position, to support the Government in the policy of peace and non-intervention, in the hope that England may continue in her career of prosperity, and you, my constituents, may derive a full share of the blessings of her position.

No. III.

Address to the Electors of Burnley, delivered at the Mechanics' Institution, Jan. 29, 1876.

Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen,—I must, in the first instance, thank you for the very cordial reception which you have given to me, and for the unanimous manner in which you selected me to be the candidate for the borough of Burnley in the place of your late lamented member. I shall not dwell at any length upon the circumstances connected with the position which I now occupy, because I feel that in what I have to say to you, I ought to speak with as much brevity as possible, in order to relieve you from your somewhat painful position in consequence of having so little room in this meeting. I don't know if you recollect that about two years ago—at the end of 1873—a very great necromancer—a great conjuror, visited Glasgow, and he made a very remarkable speech in which he criticised the conduct of Mr. Gladstone's Government. That great conjuror was none other than Mr. Disraeli, the present Prime Minister, and he charged on the Gladstone Government that they had robbed the Irish landowners of their property, that they had been guilty of sacrilege, and ruined the Irish Church. He also said that they had been guilty of a great amount of plundering; and that property and the rights of classes who were privileged classes, were not safe so long as Mr. Gladstone was in power. But, gentlemen, this necromancer went rather farther, for he raised a spirit, and he told his audience in Glasgow that there was a disturbing spirit in Europe, that was now like a moaning wind, but which might possibly become a dangerous storm. He, in fact, sought to frighten the people of the United Kingdom into a feeling of terror, lest, under the administration of the Gladstone Government, we should not only be subject to a large amount of injustice at home, but also that we should be frightened by this apparition of a disturbing spirit abroad. I don't know if you have ever witnessed a remarkable exhibition called Professor Pepper's Ghost. Professor Pepper used to go through the country exhibiting a ghost, and, by a very peculiar apparatus, presented to the view of his audience what seemed to be a very ghostly and spiritual appearance. Mr. Disraeli acted the political Pepper on the occasion of his Glasgow speech, and he raised the ghost in order to

frighten the minds and feelings of any weak persons that might read or listen to his speech. And I am sorry to say, that in this country there are many timid people, and a great many people who have class-interests to serve; and when Mr. Disraeli pointed out how much Mr. Gladstone had interfered with class interests—the landowners and in the Church—they at once felt it was necessary to unite together in order to turn Mr. Gladstone out of office; and a great number of people were frightened of this ghost and of this spirit which was passing over Europe and threatening to disturb its peace; and these individuals united with that party, and made the great Conservative reaction, and Mr. Gladstone's Government—that had done more for the good of this country, and passed more good measures than any other Government that ever existed—was turned out by a very large majority. [Here a man in the gallery ejaculated “same with you on the Irish question.” A voice: “Ne'er mind him.”] Mr. Rylands, catching the expression, said: I need only say you all know I was in the House of Commons during the passing of those measures, and I gave my support to the measures passed for the good of Ireland—for granting justice to Ireland. What happened to Mr. Disraeli from gaining this great victory? What became of this moaning spirit—this apparition that, like Dr. Pepper, he had raised to frighten his audience? We heard no more about it. It has disappeared. There is no moaning wind in Europe—no dangerous spirit Mr. Disraeli wished us to be afraid of. Would you not expect that a statesman who said that the previous Government had passed measures which had robbed the Irish landowners and plundered the Church, when he got a majority at his back that he would undo those measures? Surely, if a statesman said in Glasgow the landowners were robbed and the Church was robbed, the least he could do, when he got into power, was to give back that which the despoiled had been robbed of. If a man were brought up for committing a theft, and the authorities got possession of the stolen goods, and did not restore them to the owner, what would you think of that? The fact was that Mr. Disraeli made that speech knowing very well that he could not undo those measures. He knew very well that there was no blundering or plundering in the case, and he made the statements to produce an effect upon his audience and upon the country generally. But he did not venture, because he dared not venture, to interfere with those great measures that Mr. Gladstone had passed; but—what he considered a very important thing—he gained a victory by the combination of very important interests. He had got the Church, he got the great landowners, the publicans, the army and navy, and the civil service, and, in fact, he had got the whole class of the community that had privileges and interests contrary to the advantage of the rest of the kingdom. Well, gentlemen, what did he do when he gained the victory? It is much easier to gain a victory when men combine for that purpose than to divide the spoils when the victory is gained. Mr. Disraeli found some difficulty in satisfying the expectations raised by his speeches, and of other Tories by their speeches. The Chancellor of the Exchequer told us in Manchester the other day, that when the Tory Government came into power some of their supporters expected them to have quart pots which would hold three pints, and

that they should get from the Government 25s. worth out of every sovereign. He said, "We are going to do nothing of the kind. It is all a delusion." No doubt it was a delusion, and people were beginning to find out that after all the promises the Tories made, if they came into office, they would do little for the country, and that their promises were just delusions, and nothing more. Well, Mr. Disraeli endeavoured to give sops to his supporters. He gave a sop to the Church, or, rather, he tried to do. There were some endowments connected with schools which belonged to the kingdom at large, and his Government brought in a bill to give this money, which belonged to the people, to the Church. There was such a disturbance kicked up about this that the Government was compelled to withdraw it, and they did it under circumstances which were very discreditable to the Government. After this sop, the Government passed what is rather a blister to the Church—the Public Worship Regulation Act, which seems to have a tendency to set one set of clergy against another, but which was passed under the plea of giving power to the laity to keep their clergy in order. I do not express an opinion upon that subject, but a great many good people don't much like that mode of dealing with the subject, and don't like that sort of bill. That was the sort of legislation Mr. Disraeli gave to the Church. He gave a sop to the publican. He gave them an hour earlier to open their houses, and the Home Secretary made such a muddle in his bill that different places in the country had to shut up an hour earlier than before. A very good thing, too, but it was not what they expected a Tory Government would do. Then he tried to give a sop to the farmers, and passed the Agricultural Holdings Bill—a very good measure in its way, but, like the other measures, it had no bottom to it. As soon as the landlord chose to write his pen across it, and would have nothing to do with it, the Act becomes a dead letter. Then he gave a sop to the army by the Regimental Exchanges Bill, which enables any rich person to buy himself off from any duty he might have to perform, and to get any poor man to do it for him by paying him money. It is just the old system we wanted to get rid of by Mr. Gladstone. We don't want promotion in the army on account of their money but on account of their merit. He has given a sop to the navy instead, and I will tell you how. When I was in the House of Commons, I found—as anybody will find who looks into this matter—a great many more officers in the navy than we require. We could send out a fleet officered with admirals. We can find any quantity of captains in the Royal Navy, just, in fact, as if we could turn out all the gentlemen who hold her Majesty's Commission in the Army, and have a regiment of generals, major-generals, lieutenant-generals, colonels, lieutenant-colonels, captains, and lieutenants, and if we could form them into one great body and march them out against the French or any other invaders, you would be surprised to find what a great number of persons holding her Majesty's commission could be brought out to meet the foe. We could make an army of these. With regard to the navy, the Lords of the Admiralty had power to enter young men as cadets. He was brought in by rich men. He was to be a cadet a certain length of time and then he gets his commission. I found that

they were making a great many more cadets than they needed, to oblige these young men and their connections, and that in course of time we got more officers than are required. It was determined that these young men who went as cadets should be put through a competitive naval examination, so that any young man who was not able to do his duty would not be appointed. That was a good thing, and stopped the abuse of patronage; but the Government has given a sop to the Navy and made an alteration in respect to those competitive examinations, and the Lords of the Admiralty now can appoint as cadets any nincompoop independent of ability or brains. I have mentioned some sops which the Government has given to the people who assisted them to get the victory. But you will recollect Mr. Disraeli charged the Liberal Government with blundering. Blundering? I should like to know what Dizzy has been doing ever since he got into power but blundering. What has he been doing but blundering? It will take me much too long to tell you about all the blunders of Mr. Disraeli. But if I could show you how much has happened in the Admiralty, for instance, you would be perfectly amazed. The course he has taken with the Navy is perfectly disgraceful. He has put admirals and officers in command of ironclads who were never on ironclads before. They sent a squadron to the coast of Ireland, and in this squadron were many large iron vessels, which were under the command of an Admiral, and I have reason to believe that this Admiral never commanded an iron vessel before, and knew nothing about them. A fog came on so great that they could not see any distance, and instead of the Admiral issuing instructions how the vessels were to sail in this fog he thought it better to let each vessel go its own way. Just imagine—here are a lot of iron vessels coming in one after another, each one having a long iron ram in front, and a dense fog comes on and no one can see, and then the Admiral says, “I thought it better to let each vessel take its own way. I did not want to interfere, as it perhaps would produce some confusion.” A little accident occurred, and one of these vessels, the Vanguard, sheered off a little from its course, and up came the ram of the Iron Duke right into the side of the Vanguard, and made a tremendous opening. Well, of course the Vanguard being made in separate iron compartments, it ought not to have sunk as easily as it did, but the doors of these compartments were open in order to let the water in, and in the course of a very short time the Vanguard was sent to the bottom. The Vanguard cost us a few millions, and money that you all contributed in certain proportions, and it came out of the taxes of the nation. What do you expect the Admiralty said about that? They said that it was a great mercy that none of the sailors were lost. Mr. Ward Hunt said “No doubt it is a pity that one of our important vessels should go to the bottom, but the officers and men are to take care of themselves, and they got out of it before the misfortune.” Well now, it seems to me, gentlemen, that if we had to deal with the naval department in the way we should deal with our own business, we should find out who was to blame, and having found out who was to blame we should take great care to cashier them. That is not what the Government did; they did cashier the captain of the

Vanguard because he had made some blunder, and they did cashier and I believe censure some other naval officers, but the Admiral, who had friends at court, who had been in the habit of sitting with the Lords of the Admiralty, and whose blundering had been the cause of this disaster was let off scot free. I don't wonder at Mr. Ward Hunt making blunders in the Admiralty. When he went to the Admiralty he knew nothing about it. He was at the head of that great spending department which absorbed 10 or 12 millions per year. I heard an anecdote upon this matter. It was said when Mr. Disraeli was forming his Government he sent for Charles Adderley, and said, "Adderley, I want you to take the Board of Trade." Mr. Adderley said—"Trade! I know nothing about trade—I never was in trade." Dizzy said "But what does that matter; what does Ward Hunt know about ships?" Well, now gentlemen, there is another blunder going on, and that is in the army. I shall not stop to talk about that. The Duke of Cambridge the other night was making a speech, and he said in that speech he admitted the army was not in the most satisfactory state—the amount of desertion, the amount of disorganisation, the amount of waste which was going on there, the blundering of the military authorities was something dreadful, but the Duke, while he admitted all that, said he could not make it better with the present expenditure. They only spent 14½ millions a year upon our army—that is all, and they can't make it a good one for the money. The Duke said, "We must have more money." That is always the cry. Whenever these men make a muddle, and any department of the State is doing badly, instead of setting to work and doing to the best of their means, they immediately go to John Bull and say "We must have more money," and then it is just as bad again after spending three or four millions more money per year. But the Duke made another blunder; and he said if the taxpayers did not pay more money they must have conscription. I tell the noble Duke from this platform, as I would tell any other noble Duke or illustrious person that there is no Government living can force conscription upon the free Englishmen. Now, gentlemen, there was another great blunder. You all know about this Slave Circular. These men in Burnley who vote for the Tory party—working men I am told—will hardly like the Slave Circular. Six months ago when the Government issued this Slave Circular there was great indignation and great disturbance in the kingdom. Well, the Government had some difficulty as to the policy they should pursue, but at length they withdrew the Circular, Lord Derby making use of some remarkable expressions. I am speaking of the first Circular. Lord Derby said that while to some extent it was expressed in language liable to be misunderstood, yet it had the sanction of the highest legal authorities, and he withdrew it with that ominous announcement. I think people thought it was all over, and that the Government finding they had made a great blunder, would just "whip" it up and say nothing more about it. But you see that Mr. Disraeli, who said so much about Mr. Gladstone's blundering, cannot help blundering himself, but even when he is shown that he has committed a great blunder, goes on blundering again. And the second Circular they bring out was framed no better than the first, but I have no doubt it is framed as "the highes

legal authorities" have authorized. I need not dwell upon this, but you know perfectly well what it means. We always have flattered ourselves that the flag of England marked the power of England as to freedom. We have always been proud, every one of us, and I hope there is not a man in Burnley who is not proud of the feeling, that wherever the folds of the flag of England are unfurled, there the power of England is for the right and the free. Is it not a truth that we have always considered, that when a slave sets his foot on English soil he is free? And have we not always said the British ship is British soil, and that the flag of England represents the truth and power of Great Britain? That, was supposed to be the case until this Slave Circular appeared. Now, what were we told? We were told that the captains of the Royal Navy seeing some poor struggling slave buffeting with the waves, and perhaps managing to support himself upon some log of wood, who seeks admission on board a British ship, from a shore where he has been held in bondage, the captain must look at him and tell him he must not allow him to enter that ship, unless the poor slave was in imminent danger of death. But if the poor wretch is in imminent danger of death, then he is pulled in; and then comes—I had almost called it a farce, but it is too serious a subject to be called a farce—then comes the pretence of the affair. He is not allowed to ask the slave to make any admission as to his master, but he has to take the first convenient opportunity of sending the slave back in a ship touching the shore of the waters from which he was taken, where his master, in all probability, was waiting with a posse of men, ready to pounce upon him and carry him back to worse slavery than before. The *Times* newspaper, commenting upon this, said it was a remarkable example of the desire of the Government to hunt with the hare and hold with the hounds, or, we should say, to hunt with the slave and hold with the slave-owner. Is it not disgraceful that the British Government should issue a circular like this, after careful consideration, after Cabinet Councils, and thus set forth to the world that they are not prepared to maintain the inviolability of the British flag? They said it was done for the comity of nations. They say they have done it on the advice of the highest legal authorities from the comity of nations. Who are the highest legal authorities? I suppose, amongst others, that very distinguished gentleman, the Attorney-General. I suppose he is a high legal authority. I saw a speech the other day which he made at a dinner; I think it was the Law Clerks' Society, Salford; and this dignified Attorney-General, fresh in the fulness of his distinction that he has achieved by his learning at the bar, made a speech, and, alluding to his absence from London, he said he did not suppose the Government would complain of his being away from any duty he had to perform, but if they did complain, then all he had to say was, "The Government be —;" and then he stopped. saying, "The reporters are here, and I had better not finish the sentence." Sir John Holker went on to say that he admitted he was no great luminary. He was right there. He said he was no great luminary in politics, but a good getter of verdicts. Now, he may be a clever lawyer in that capacity, but I think he is right in saying that he is no luminary in politics. But he is a man who evidently knows the reason

why he should be a Conservative. I don't think he cares much about politics, but he says he is a good Conservative, and he gives a good reason for being so, for he says the Conservatives have always hold of the right end of the stick. He takes hold of the right end of the stick, and is satisfied at getting all the good things from the Tory Administration. I don't think the opinion of Sir John Holker, taking him as one of the highest legal authorities, ought to have guided the Government in this momentous case. Then there is the Lord Chancellor—I speak of him with great respect—but I cannot help thinking of our Lord Chancellor, Henry Brougham—and if Lord Brougham had been applied to on this circular he would have condemned it as a disgrace to this kingdom, and a disgrace to humanity. Henry Brougham would have said: “Talk not of the rights of property of the planter to his slave. I deny the right; I acknowledge not the property. The feelings of our common nature rise in rebellion against it.” Instead of my own words, I will read the words of Lord Brougham upon that subject: “Tell me not of rights; talk not of the property of the planter in his slaves. I deny the right; I acknowledge not the property. The principles—the feelings of our common nature rise in rebellion against it. Be the appeal made to the understanding or to the heart, the sentence is the same—they reject it. In vain you tell me of laws that sanction such a claim. There is a law above all the enactment of human codes, the same throughout the world, the same in all times, unchangeable and eternal. While men despise fraud, loathe rapine, and abhor blood, they will reject with indignation the wild and guilty phantasy that man can hold property in men.” That was the noble opinion expressed by a former Lord Chancellor, and I think that the man who expressed such an opinion would not have authorised such a circular as Government has issued. Well, now, gentleman, there is another blunder, in my judgment, which has just commenced; it is a blunder of a kind that Mr. Disraeli would be likely to commit. Mr. Disraeli is one of those men who love to go and do something to astonish the world, to make men admire and think him exceedingly clever; but he has an object in doing it, and I think the purchase of the Suez Canal Shares, when it comes to be carefully considered, will be found to be a blunder of that character that Mr. Disraeli was so likely to be given to. Now, to begin with, Lord Derby said it was entirely a commercial transaction to keep open the Suez Canal, and not a political transaction at all. What do you think of a commercial transaction in which the Government gave four millions for property which they could have got for half that price? The Suez Canal shares, for which the Government gave four millions, were being hawked about in Paris at half the price. That is not like business, is it? Lord Derby said they had only a week to consider whether they would buy these shares. But these shares had been in the market a considerable time, and it was known that the Ruler of Egypt was very wishful to sell. We have got these shares without any coupons attached, and we shall have no dividend for twenty years, but the Khedive guarantees interest—£200,000 a year—for the next twenty years. What do we want with these Suez Canal shares? They say to keep open our connection with our Eastern markets—no doubt a most important subject. But the truth

is, no one was going to close it. We are the great customers of the Canal ; we gave the interest to the shareholders in the Canal, and made it to their interest to keep it open ; no one would close it, except in time of war. Supposing we were at war with France, and suppose our fleet was in the Mediterranean, do you suppose the French would enquire if we had any shares in the Canal before they began to bombard our vessels ? Nothing of the kind. I will tell you what we should do : we should try to sweep their vessels off the Mediterranean, and whether we had bought the Suez Canal or not, would not help us at all. What we are likely to get out of it is this : sending a man to the court of Egypt and getting involved in Egyptian finance. The effect, first of all, of letting the Khedive have four millions was this : up jumped the Egyptian bonds, the price becoming much higher. Then it is heard that the Khedive is spending his money in a foolish way ; then, down go the shares in the Egyptian stock. Thus, we are really giving encouragement to stock-jobbing. I think, when all the circumstances come to be enquired into, it will be found an unwise transaction and a blunder, which the Government has committed in another direction. Well, now, gentlemen, I have gone through a number of the blunders which, in my judgment, the Government has committed, and I might mention many more, because, in many respects, I think the administration of the affairs of this country has been of a very disgraceful kind. Now we come to the future. Lord Derby has tried to show us that a working man could only be a Conservative. He said : “ You have everything you want. You are very comfortable, aren’t you ? You do not pay many taxes, you get very fair wages, and are very well off, and don’t want anything more, do you ? ” Well, if I had a property bringing in £200,000, and increasing in value yearly, by the extension of the trade of this country, I should be very content, no doubt. But what we say is, that every measure promoted by the Liberal party is not for pulling down people, but to lift up those who are rather low. Now, gentlemen, Lord Derby said that popular politicians never gave a man better wages or a better house to live in. Well, gentlemen, I can tell Lord Derby he is entirely mistaken about popular politicians, and I tell him that when the Liberal party repealed the Corn Laws they gave the people both better wages and better houses to live in. What has been the effect of the free-trade measures we passed ? Since 1841 the imports of corn, wheat, etc., have increased from 27 millions to 129½ millions, which means more bread and more comfort for the working classes ; and the free-trade policy has had the power of increasing the exports of British manufactures, which, during the last 35 years, have increased from 51 millions to 255 millions sterling annually—no less than five-fold. Just imagine these enormous sums, and consider that all these million pounds’ worth of goods cannot go out of this country without employing men who make calico and make iron—the demand for which rules the price of wages—and that the more trade this country can do, the more will the tendency be for wages to rise. I say Lord Derby is entirely wrong, and I say, further, that he and his father did their utmost to prevent these measures of popular politicians. I am afraid, gentlemen, I am keeping you a little too long. It is rather hot for you. We have a right to compare what the present Government

has done with what the Gladstone Government did with respect to these matters affecting working classes. It is quite certain that the more taxes we pay, the greater is the expenditure of this country. The more taxes are levied, the more oppressive will be the burden upon the country, which will tend to prevent the wages and industry of the country being advanced. Wherever you have large taxes they interfere with the prosperity of the country, for in one way or another the payment of taxes, to a great extent, is brought out of labour ; therefore it is very important to the interests of all classes of society that the expenditure of the country should be kept down. In the five years I was in Parliament—I went to Parliament at the time when Mr. Gladstone's Government was formed—I found that the Tory Government had left us in debt three millions of money. Now, Mr. Gladstone paid off that three millions of money. He not only paid off that three millions of money, but he repealed a number of duties. He repealed the remaining duty upon corn, which amounted to nearly one million sterling—it was 1s. per quarter—and we not only paid one million in the form of custom duty, but it had the effect of raising the price of corn 1s. per quarter all through the kingdom. Mr. Gladstone repealed the sugar duty—4½ millions, the coffee duties, which amounted to a quarter of a million—all articles of common consumption which go into the household cupboards, and thence into the stomachs of the people : in all he repealed duties amounting to £5,600,000, and in addition to that he repealed other taxes amounting to £7,000,000 per year. That is what Mr. Gladstone did in five years when I had the honour of supporting him in Parliament. In addition to that there was another legacy left by the Tories. There was not only the deficiency of £3,000,000, but they left Mr. Gladstone the cost of the Abyssinian war. When the Tories went into the Abyssinian war the present Lord Derby said it would only cost us £3,000,000 ; but when the Liberal Government had to pay the bill it amounted to no less than 8 or 9 millions of money. And when it was investigated, it would take me all night to tell you of the gross and scandalous waste of English property in the course of that war, which showed that the administrators and managers of it were the most incompetent and careless people that could be entrusted with the public expenditure. Then, during the Franco-German war, such pressure was brought to bear upon the Government that they asked the House of Commons for a vote of two millions in order to satisfy the Tories that they were doing something to protect the country against any danger that might occur in the course of the war. This was a hollow piece of foolish expenditure, and I have the satisfaction of stating that I, along with six other members of the House of Commons, recorded my vote against the absurd proposal. However, the Government had to pay it ; and they had also paid three millions for the Alabama claims, which was infinitely better than having a war with our kindred across the Atlantic. If ever there came a war between the American nation and our own, it would be a fratricidal war, which would affect everyone in this room, depress trade, and stop all the elements of progress. War between these two great nations, which ought to lead the van of civilisation and support freedom throughout the world, would be the greatest

misfortune that could happen. I think, therefore, we acted wisely in submitting the Alabama dispute to arbitration. In addition to all this, the Gladstone Government paid off no less than 25 millions sterling of the national debt ; and having done this they retired from office, leaving six millions of money unappropriated as a present to their successors. The Tories distributed this six millions of money in various ways in the reduction of taxation, but when the country bade good-bye to Mr. Gladstone, it bade good-bye to any great chance of a reduction of taxation by means of money saved by the Tories. They bade good-bye to a man who was anxious to keep down expenditure so far as the House of Commons would let him, and they put into office a Tory Government whose policy had always been to make things pleasant all round. Their policy had always been that of spending money in order to satisfy those people who looked upon a Tory Government as a beneficent institution that existed to bring down the blessings of Heaven upon every member of the Tory party. When the Tory party went out of office, in 1868, they left their successors a number of estimates of expenditure which had to be borne in 1869, and therefore the expenditure in that year amounted to 75½ millions. In the following year the Liberal Government reduced it to £69,100,000. An outcry such as I shall never forget was raised in the House of Commons by the Tories—by interested parties. It was said that the services were being starved, and that the stores in the naval department were so exhausted that really the poor sailors were in danger of having nothing to put on and nothing to eat. The Government made an inquiry into the circumstances, and found that there were stocks of articles of some kinds that would last for twenty-eight years, and that some of the stores had gone mouldy ; and it was determined to clear them out. They had, therefore, to spend a little more money than they intended in the following year, and then, unfortunately, the Franco-German war broke out, and the expenditure got up to 71 millions. In the House of Commons I do my best at all times to check what I consider to be unnecessary expenditure. I stand up sometimes with nobody to support me, in order to protest against what I consider to be waste in the management of the national finances. For years I used to criticise the naval estimates. I pointed out the wasteful management of the dockyards, and showed that we could have bought many of our vessels far cheaper from private firms than we could build them under the present dockyard system. I did not receive much support on this point, but I see that the *Times*, which formerly criticised me for the course I took with regard to the naval estimates, is now saying precisely the same thing. What has Mr. Disraeli's Government done already in this matter of expenditure? Last year they spent 75 millions. They have got it up to the figure at which it was when they went out of office in 1868, and on every hand they are crying out for more money. They say they must have more money for the navy. Of course they must, if they are going to sink all our ships. I will tell you what the Government have done. In the last navy list, amongst the ships in commission, they inserted the *Vanguard*, opposite which they put an asterisk as an index to a note at the bottom of the page, which was in these words,

“Sunk near Dublin.” I noticed a statement in one of the newspapers of to-day to the effect that great surprise was felt at my coming out as a Churchman when I contested previous elections as a Dissenter. This statement is untrue. I have been a member of the Church of England for the last 35 years. It was stated in another newspaper that I was a Unitarian, which is likewise untrue. I certainly was born an Independent. My forefathers were Independents, and I was educated as an Independent; and let me tell you what I said to the vicar of the parish in which I reside, who was dining with me the other day. I said, “If these Test and Corporation Acts had continued, by which my father was kept out of public employment; and if you had continued to levy church rates, which my father would never pay, and distrained upon Dissenters for non-payment of them; if you had continued to maintain that no Dissenter should be married in his own chapel, or in any way have any religious service which Dissenters now of course are properly allowed to perform; if you had sought to keep Dissenters under the heel of the Church, I would never have left the Dissenting body, I would never have gone into your churches, and would never have cast a stigma upon those noble ancestors of mine who fought for many generations for freedom.” In becoming a Churchman I have not lost the sympathy I felt towards all religious bodies. I have a great regard for the Church. In this parish of Burnley I know you have most excellent clergymen who are friends of my own—two of your clergymen are my brothers-in-law—and who are working with the greatest self-denial and piety; and I know many clergymen in different parts of the kingdom who are working with a view of doing as much good as they can amongst the population by which they are surrounded. Therefore, I am a friend of the Church; but I believe it is not acting the part of a friend of the Church to try and put obstructions in the path of its ministers and active workers. Do you think it was a friend of the Church that raised the question of whether ministers were to be called “reverend” or not? The Church gains nothing by being intolerant to other bodies; and I, for one, as a Churchman, have no feeling but one of brotherhood towards every member of other religious bodies in this country. I believe that at the present time the bench of bishops includes men remarkable for their learning and piety, and that it is in every way the best bench of bishops that ever adorned the Church; but that is a good reason, in my mind, for thinking that they would be a great deal better and do a great deal more good in their own dioceses than by sitting in London. It may happen—public opinion seems to be pointing in that direction, and everything seems to be saying—that the time is coming when the Church should be separated from the State. I, as a Churchman, believe that separation would be a great blessing to the Church, but I think that if they were separated it ought to be done in a friendly and generous spirit towards the Church. Dean Stanley tried the other day to make it appear that, in the event of the disestablishment of the Church, the cathedrals and parish churches would be put up to auction. I never heard, in the whole of my conversation with advocates of disestablishment, of such an outrageous idea, and I should be very sorry to see any such change made as would

deprive a large religious body of the places of worship in which they had been accustomed to meet. The question of disestablishment, however, is not yet upon us. What *is* upon us is the question of full religious equality in reference to Dissenters; and so far as the State Church is allowed to interfere with full religious freedom and equality, it is a pressing and immediate question which politicians must take up. Mr. Osborne Morgan's Burials Bill is one of the measures which politicians ought to support, and which, as a Churchman, I think they ought to be only too glad to grant as a reasonable concession to those who have a right to be interred in the churchyards. On what ground do you suppose the clergy refused this reasonable concession? Last session there was an impression that Mr. Disraeli was inclined to give way, and the result is that many of the clergy have been protesting against it. The Bishop of Lincoln declared that the Deity was the proprietor of every churchyard in the country, and that, therefore, to give a foot of them to any but professing members of the Church of England would be robbery of God, an act of sacrilege, treachery, and cowardice. I think the Bishop must have lost his head when he made that monstrous statement. Why, the present right of ownership over the churchyards on the part of the Church of England is only 300 years old, and it came out of an act of Parliament; and I do not, therefore, see how the Bishop could claim the ownership on the part of the Deity. It was an act of Parliament arrangement, and the House of Commons that for the time had given the members of the Episcopalian Church the exclusive right to perform offices for the dead in the churchyards, have an equal right to open them as national property to other religious denominations; and I hope that that will very shortly be done. If I have the honour of being returned for Burnley I shall give my vote in favour of the Bill with great pleasure. There is no honour I should prize more than that of being member for Burnley. I feel a great attachment to the borough in consequence of my intimacy with your late member. I and your late member were like brothers in the House of Commons, and it was only on Thursday that my friend the Chairman almost broke me down by reading that last letter of Mr. Shaw—a letter of which I never heard before—in which, as it were with his dying hand, he was good enough to recommend me to the electors of Burnley. It was to me, as you may suppose, most affecting under the circumstances. I know how anxious Mr. Shaw was at all times to do that which was right and honourable in his political career, and to promote the best interests of the nation. I know how he battled against anything which he thought was unfair in the privileged classes, or which he thought interfered with the progress and well-being of the main body of his fellow-countrymen. I shall try to continue in the course which I had the pleasure of joining your late member in when we sat on the same benches. If I am supported by the electors of the borough, it may be that I may render some humble aid in the direction of public service, great or small. If I become your member you may rely upon this, that my votes will always be given in favour of popular rights and religious freedom, and all those measures that will tend to make the people happy, contented, and prosperous.

No. IV.

Annual Address to his Constituents, delivered in the Mechanics' Institution, Burnley, January 2, 1877.

Mr. Mayor, ladies and gentlemen,—I think it is a happy circumstance that the first occasion upon which I have the honour of delivering an annual address to my constituents has been arranged at this festive season of the year, when I can wish for you, and for all the inhabitants of Burnley, a prosperous and a happy new year; and I do not forget that at this festive season we generally seek to forgive those who may have been at variance with us, and we generally seek to be placed on kind terms of relationship with all those by whom we are surrounded. Now, I am not going this evening to revive any painful memories or personal feelings connected with the last election contest. I observe that my hon. opponent has on a recent occasion delivered a speech in Burnley, in which he criticised some of my sayings and doings. I am not going to retaliate upon my hon. opponent. I am not going to answer his speech; in fact, if I attempted to do so I unfortunately could not, because I do not recollect any part of it at the present moment; and certainly I have no wish to say anything which can be personally offensive to the Conservatives of Burnley. I remember that I am the representative of all parties in Burnley, and I have the satisfaction of saying that since I became member for Burnley I have made the personal acquaintance of leading members of the Conservative party, from whom I have received acts of kindness and courtesy which I much appreciate; and I hope that, as time goes on, I may have the opportunity of making the personal acquaintance, and perhaps the friendship, of some of the leading gentlemen on the other side in Burnley, whom I have not yet had the honour of meeting, but whose names I am perfectly familiar with and towards whom I can have no feelings but those of respect. Gentlemen, I have only to say, in addition—as this is the first occasion upon which I have had the honour of delivering an address—that I shall only be too happy, while I am in Parliament, at any time to render any services in Parliament to any member of my constituency: if I can render him any service he is quite welcome to any that I owe to him as his representative for the time being. Well, now, gentlemen: I have been told that this is the occasion for my giving an account of my stewardship. I believe that in Parliament, during the last Session, so far as I have been able I have carried out the convictions which I expressed when I had the honour of appearing before you as a candidate at the last election. I have not forgotten those principles of religious liberty and rights of conscience which I advocated in our election meetings. I had the pleasure of supporting Mr. Osborne Morgan in his resolution, which offered an act of justice towards the Dissenters of this kingdom; and, in connection with the Education measure, I sought, as far as I could, to do justice to the rights of conscience—not only the conscience of party and section, but of all parties and sections. I cannot say that I took an extreme view on this question; in fact, I took a moderate view. While I was quite in favour of education in public schools, I was desirous that the rights of

conscience should be recognised in the arrangements with that view ; and while I was prepared to give further support to the establishment of Board Schools, I was not prepared to adopt any measures which would be unfair or unjust towards denominational schools ; in fact, I tried, as far as I could, to support measures to extend the blessings of education, and, at the same time, not to interfere with the conscience or the rights of any religious or other body of men in the kingdom. Well, now, gentlemen : in regard to the Merchant Shipping Bill, I aided my friend, Mr. Plimsoll, to the best of my ability, in making that blundering bill of the Government as good a bill as we could make it. I am sorry to say that we were not very successful, and I am afraid that the bill, as it was passed, and after the alterations in the House of Lords, is not likely to be very serviceable in protection of the lives of our seamen. Gentlemen, there was another very important matter which came before the House of Commons on several occasions—of course, I allude to the reform of the drink traffic. I, at all times, gave votes in the direction of promoting that reform. I supported measures of which I could not with all the details agree, but my great principle has been this, that I think there ought to be a certain amount of well-considered and of well-arranged rate-paying control ; but I hope, whenever any measure of that kind comes before the country, which is pressing upon all classes of the community, that it will be a well-considered measure, doing injustice to no class of the community, but seeking the welfare of all classes by promoting the elevation of the community at large. And to that extent I shall always be prepared, in the House of Commons, to support such measures, and in the meantime I shall seek to give votes that will, at all events, show I am anxious that there should be some measures of reform in this very great and important direction. Gentlemen, there was another important matter which came before Parliament on several occasions—I mean in regard to the state of Ireland. Now, I went to Parliament with the determination of carrying out, as I have always done, an intention to encourage in the general disposition of Parliament a spirit of kindness, a spirit of sympathy, and a spirit of conciliation towards the Irish people. I recollect that, for many generations past, the Irish people received very scant measures of justice from the English nation ; and therefore I make allowances for the excited feelings and the disturbed feelings they have occasionally exhibited ; and I, for one, as a member of Parliament, am always ready, so far as I can, to do everything by my action in Parliament to allay those feelings of irritation and excitement, under the belief that as much as we can give in the form of justice and equality to our Irish fellow-countrymen, just to that extent we may hope to attach them to our institutions, and render the union between us closer and more lasting than it would be likely to be under any circumstances. Gentlemen, in addition to that, I may say that I took my usual interest in promoting national economy. I find that the present Government is an extravagant Government, a Government wasting the resources of the country. I am prepared to say that in every department of the State there is a large amount of extravagance, and a large amount of waste which ought to be put a stop to ; and I am prepared, so long as I represent Burnley, to use my in-

fluence—although it is not a popular course to take—I am prepared to use my influence, as far as possible, to protect the pockets of the public from those many hands that are constantly putting themselves into them. Gentlemen, I proposed a resolution in the House of Commons condemning the extravagance of the Government. That resolution was supported in a very able speech by my right hon. friend Mr. Childers, and it received the support of right hon. and hon. gentlemen, and after giving rise to a very interesting and important debate when we went to the division—in which, of course, in the present House of Commons, we were sure to be defeated—we had the support, I think, of seventeen members of the late Gladstone Administration. Well, now, gentlemen : you will perhaps ask me what are the results of the session about which I have been speaking? Well, I am bound to say that the results of the session are perfectly miserable and contemptible. The Disraeli Government might at the close of the session, with very great truth and propriety, have offered up the confession that they “have done those things which they ought not to have done, and left undone those things which they ought to have done.” The fact is, this last year of our Lord 1876 of Tory Administration may be called the year of Tory blundering ; and the session of 1876 may be called the session of Tory blundering. Do you recollect that, at the end of 1873, Mr. Disraeli wrote a letter in which he charged Mr. Gladstone and his Government with blundering? I cannot help thinking, when I look back on this past session with how much truth Mr. Gladstone might retaliate on Mr. Disraeli, and say—

“I thank thee, Jew, for teaching me that word.”

Mr. Mayor, the first great blunder of the season was the Slave Trade Circular, about which we talked when I was here before. That Slave Trade Circular was such a gross blunder that it offended the highest feelings of the British nation ; it dragged the flag of Great Britain into the dirt, and humiliated the spirit of the British people, who for so many generations had stood up for the freedom of mankind. The first Slave Circular was admittedly so bad that the Tory Government agreed it was a blunder, and they withdrew it and issued a second circular. That Circular, when it came to be investigated, was found to be almost as bad as the first ; and then they withdrew that also. That was a blunder—another blunder—and then they referred the matter to a Royal Commission ; they referred to a Royal Commission of Inquiry a subject that everybody knew everything about. Well, this Royal Commission took a great deal of evidence and made a long report, but practically it was of no service whatever. We in the House of Commons tried to bring the Government to a sense of what was right, and a resolution was proposed by my hon. friend Mr. Whitbread expressing the opinion of the House that a slave once admitted to the protection of the British flag should be treated as if he were free, and should not be removed from or ordered to leave the ship on the ground of his being a slave. Well, you would say that was a reasonable resolution ; but we were met by the full strength of the Tory Government, and while 248 voted with us, 293 voted against us, and we were defeated by a majority of 45. That

was another blunder on the part of the Tories—to defeat us on that occasion, because when they came to issue the last and finally amended edition of the Slave Circular they had accepted the very terms that we in our resolution had tried to establish. Well, now : the second great blunder of the session was the purchase of the Suez Canal Shares. Now, gentlemen, this was a measure after Mr. Disraeli's own heart—a flashy measure, a measure that would excite the imagination of the population of this country, and carry it to such high flights that it would lead people to neglect the interests of practical and common-sense legislation. I told Mr. Disraeli in the House of Commons, last session, that he was a great pyrotechnist. I said his measures were very much like fireworks—that they made a great display for a moment, but that they were very evanescent—they soon went out—they were utterly useless, and they cost the nation a great deal of money ; and it was thought at the time by the people imposed upon by the measure that the purchase of those Suez Canal shares indicated a great march of English policy. It was imagined that the paw of the British lion was about to be placed upon the country of Egypt ; that our road to India was to be so protected that there should be no possibility of an interruption ; and they said that all those great advantages justified and explained Mr. Disraeli's proposals. Well, now : the first shock to the popular delusion came when Lord Derby, in Scotland, I think it was, said the purchase of the Suez Canal shares was simply a commercial speculation, and that England was simply taking shares in a company in which it had some interest, and which it wished to promote. Well, now, gentlemen : when we had descended from the flights of fancy which Mr. Disraeli had carried us into, and began to look at the purchase of the shares as a common-sense and trade transaction, we began to find out that we had “paid too dear for our whistle.” If we had wanted those shares—which, mark you, won't pay us a penny interest, practically, for twenty years—we could have bought them at a very much lower rate. Now I said that in this room, during the election contest, and I rather fancy one of my good friends on the other side said I daren't repeat it in the House. I believe it was supposed that I should be so oppressed by the sight of the people on the Treasury Bench that I should not venture to repeat what I might be willing to mention in Burnley, expecting that the Burnley people would be easily “gulled,” but that Mr. Disraeli and the Chancellor of the Exchequer would not be likely to be taken in. Well, now : I have said it three times over in the House of Commons. I said it once in the presence of a number of people on the Treasury Bench, and it was given the “go-by.” I said it a second time in the speech which I delivered in moving the reduction of national taxation. There was the Treasury Bench, quite full ! Some member of the Government or Cabinet was put up to answer me ;—in fact, I believe three or four of them spoke—but they never touched upon—had not a word to say about—the purchase of the Suez Canal shares ; they never replied to what I said, so, at the very last, at the very end of the session, on August 8th or 9th, just before I came away from London, I thought I would have one last kick, so I said it again. I again said that they had paid this exorbitant price for a commodity they could have purchased with very much less money. The Chancellor of

the Exchequer answered me, but he never denied a fact I had used ; so that I think I may say I have been perfectly justified in everything I said, during the election contest, in regard to that purchase. Well, now, gentlemen: the third great blunder of the session was the muddling with the Egyptian finance. I won't go into that, because it would take me too long, but the folly of our Government in sending Mr. Cave as a sort of wet nurse to the Khedive of Egypt could not be excused. The effect of it was not to do the Khedive much good, because all the wet nursing only led him into bankruptcy, and it gave opportunity to stock-jobbing of such magnitude that numbers of families in this kingdom were either ruined or very seriously embarrassed, in consequence of purchasing Egyptian Funds on the faith of the British Government taking the Khedive of Egypt in hand. The Government committed a blunder in having mixed themselves up in any way whatever with the finances of the Khedive. But I must hurry on to another great blunder of the session—the Royal Titles Bill. Now, gentlemen, I do not hesitate to say that was a blunder, although I am speaking at a time when the newspapers are full of the accounts of that imposing and grand ceremony which took place at Delhi the other day. I say it was certainly a blunder to this extent, that in giving the title to the Queen of supreme lady paramount of India, even if it was desirable the Queen should take up a leading title of that kind in India, and should assume such a title in order to make the Indian tributary princes feel more and more their subjection,—I say it was wrong to take the title of Empress, which was so offensive to the people of this country, which raised the question of the Queen's honour before the House of Commons and the kingdom, and which was only accepted under the guarantee that this title should not be used within the British dominions, but only made use of as a sort of gilt or plated title for use in the territories of India. I say that it was a blunder to touch the Queen's title in that way. We all love the title of Queen of Great Britain, and I very much question whether—notwithstanding all this grand fanfaronade, this beating of drums, and waving of splendid banners and firing of cannons—in the long run, this arrangement will be for the advantage and contentment of our Indian possessions. Well, now : in the midst of that discussion, there was one circumstance which I consider stamped the Prime Minister of this kingdom as being unfit to hold in his hand the destinies of this Empire. In the midst of that discussion, apparently without preparation, and certainly creating great surprise amongst everybody who heard it, Mr. Disraeli said that the taking of the title of Empress of India by her Majesty was the means of resisting the power of the Emperor of Russia, whose title of Emperor was calculated to overshadow the title of Queen of India. Therefore, he made it appear that this title of Empress was really a sort of assertion of right against Russia, and of giving notice to Russia that we thought she was about to invade our Indian empire, and that we were prepared to prevent that invasion by putting upon our Queen's head an imperial crown which would weigh quite as heavy as the imperial crown of Russia. Well, I say it was a most unstatesmanlike, a most objectionable, and a most offensive thing, for the Prime Minister of England to

have said that in reference to an allied Power. Well, now, gentlemen : I have hurried over the blunders of the Government in connection with the past session, because it happens at the present time that the blunders committed by her Majesty's Government in connection with foreign affairs, far outweigh the blunders I have alluded to in their home legislation. Mr. Disraeli, you will recollect, when he stood for the county of Bucks, in the beginning of 1874, gave an intimation that he intended to go into office for the purpose of promoting a more spirited foreign policy. In that celebrated address, speaking of the Gladstone Government, he said : " Generally speaking, I should say of the Administration of the last five years that it would have been better for us all if there had been a little more energy in our foreign policy and a little less in our domestic legislation." That was his programme, and nobody can deny that, as regards domestic legislation, he has carried his programme out. He has done little enough, in all conscience ; but what has he done in regard to our foreign policy ? You recollect the late Lord Derby once said of the Whig Government that it " meddled and muddled " in its foreign policy. Well, what the present Government and the present Lord Derby have done has been to " muddle " without " meddling." The fact is, if Lord Derby had chosen, if he hadn't shown himself to be in a cynical indifference, and surrounded himself by selfish considerations, there is no doubt whatever that he might have done very much more in carrying out Mr. Disraeli's programme of putting more energy into our foreign affairs. As it was, the programme has not been carried out ; and, in regard to the Eastern Question, it may be safely said that for months past there has been a succession of mistakes of so serious a character that they have affected the happiness of, and, in fact, have entailed great sufferings upon, a very large population in the East ; and I believe that these mistakes can never be rectified. If the Government had acted wisely a few months ago, many of the evils which have occurred would never have existed ; and, whatever course they take now, they never can make up for the want of decision and energy, and want of principle, which marked the earlier stages of this question. Now, gentlemen, I should like to remind you that this Eastern Question, although it has come upon us with a great amount of freshness and a great amount of force, is no new question. It has come up again and again. We have had the Eastern Question times without number. History is full of lessons with regard to the Eastern Question, and yet our Government seem utterly unable to learn any lessons. If they read history at all they must read these lessons, and yet they have derived no benefit from the lessons which history, I think, very clearly teaches. It seems to me there are three great principles which our Government ought to have recognised in dealing with the Eastern Question. The first of these great principles is, that the Turkish Government is incurably bad, and that its promises are utterly worthless. Second, that " Russophobia " is a great folly and delusion, which has cost us millions of money already, and many valuable lives, without any good result ; and the third great principle which I think our Government ought to have recognised in dealing with this Eastern Question is, that the only safe and honourable policy for this country is the policy of justice and humanity—the policy

of sympathy with nations struggling for their freedom—a policy of willingness to join hands with any of the European Powers, Russia included, to give the nations the freedom for which they are struggling. Gentlemen: the Government had set their faces against these principles for months past, and, but for the speeches and pamphlets of Mr. Gladstone, but for the public meetings which expressed in loud tones the voice of England, the Government would have continued that policy to the present moment. But the Tories told us that we were unpatriotic in interfering with the Government—that we ought to treat the Government with such blind confidence that we should leave them to deal with this matter as they think best, and that Mr. Gladstone has acted a part which is not creditable to him in having sought to move the public mind upon the subject. Gentlemen: if we had taken that course—if we had allowed the Government to go headlong into the difficulties which they were creating—I believe that the end of it would have been that this country would again have been dragged into an infamous war, on the side of an infamous despotism against the friends of liberty. Gentlemen: the language of the Government told us what to expect from them. They talked of the Turk as a gentleman whose word of honour must be regarded as binding upon him, although history tells us that for generations past the Turks have never kept their word, and their promises have been only like waste paper. Then the Government have talked to us, especially Lord Beaconsfield, of the necessity of maintaining the independence and the integrity of the Turkish Empire, as though it were not a foul and loathsome thing that casts its sickly shadow over Europe. And then the Government have spoken of the maintenance of treaties in relation to Turkey, as though the facts were not that Turkey has torn those treaties to shreds whenever we have attempted to put a barrier between her lustful cruelty and her wretched subjects. History teaches us that the Turks are irremediably bad—that you can't improve them. Why, Mr. Mayor, if I could carry back your imagination five centuries; if I could go and picture there some of the countries in Eastern Europe—Christian countries, who had believed in and followed the doctrines of Christ for hundreds of years—and if I could take you into the fruitful villages and fields of those countries, covered with industrious and happy inhabitants; if I could picture the towns and villages—the abodes of labour, happiness, and freedom, with the population increasing in numbers, wealth, and prosperity; and then if I could take you four centuries back, when that tide of Turkish barbarism surged over this wide part of Christian Europe, and left it by its surging in a state of ruin and desolation, you would be appalled. The effect, sir, of these four centuries of ruin and desolation has been that these countries—some of the finest in Eastern Europe, which ought to have added to the prosperity and welfare of this country and all the world by the interchange of commodities, industry, and wealth—these countries in many cases are desolate and depopulated, and in the rich plains, where formerly busy towns of large size stood, there is now not a single inhabitant left. There are three lines which describe this truth—

Byzantians boast that on the clod
Where once their Sultan's horse hath trod,
Grows neither grass, nor shrub, nor tree.

And there, where its vile despotism moves over the face of the land, it leaves all this wretchedness and ruin ; and this is the nation the integrity and independence of which Lord Beaconsfield thinks ought to be the cardinal point of our British policy. I say such a policy as the maintenance and integrity of such a nation is degrading to the British name. I say, Mr. Mayor, that the true policy of Great Britain is to seek, as far as possible, to roll back that tide of desolation and cruelty which came upon these countries four centuries ago. That is the true policy of Britain, and that is, I believe, the policy which would, in the long run, serve not only the welfare of mankind generally, but promote the interests of this country in a remarkable manner. The worthlessness of the promises of the Turks has been proved by the fact that they have made promises again and again ; whenever they are acting under any pressure whatever, they are always ready to give forth an edict of the Sultan in the most honeyed and the most polite language, expressive of his care for his Christian subjects, and his desire to make them happy, and to put them in as comfortable and just a position as possible. And he would make any amount of edicts as to the reforms he would carry out, but they are never carried out ; they never have been. Those promises have always been violated ; and perhaps the greatest specimen of audacity which has occurred within a long period has been the fact that, after the history which has marked the past ages of the Turkish Empire, they should now come before Europe, holding in one hand a grand new Constitution, by which they propose to raise all these countries of persecution to the highest point of political freedom, and, in the other hand, a promissory note, on which is written that they intend to pay the full interest of this debt—when they get the money. I suppose there is nobody in Europe who believes these promises, except two men—the Right Hon. Earl of Beaconsfield, Prime Minister of England, and Sir Henry Elliott, her Majesty's Ambassador at Constantinople. Now, Mr. Mayor, I must say that I look upon the mission of Lord Salisbury to Constantinople with some feelings of satisfaction and hope. At all events, it has put an end to this cry about the independence of the Turkish Empire ; because Lord Salisbury is sent there to interfere with the independence of the Turkish Empire. I trust that the integrity of the Turkish Empire will fail very soon, and that we shall hear nothing more about the independence and integrity of the Turkish Empire. I am bound to say, however, that when we look back at the speeches made by Lord Beaconsfield, I do not see a single speech which shows that he has altered his mind one iota, and I believe that the change which has taken place in the action of the Government by the mission of Lord Salisbury marks this fact—that the public opinion out of doors has strengthened the hands of a party within the Cabinet, at the head of which is Lord Salisbury, and that that party has over-ruled Mr. Disraeli—or rather Lord Beaconsfield—and that the mission of Lord Salisbury is, in fact, a very bitter pill for Lord Beaconsfield to swallow. Now, perhaps, I might be allowed to remind you of a little history connected with Lord Salisbury and

Lord Beaconsfield. It so happened that when Mr. Disraeli, in connection with the late Lord Derby, made that celebrated leap in the dark, with respect to the Radical Reform Bill, Lord Salisbury was a member of the House of Commons, and he was a member of the Tory Cabinet. He was then Lord Cranbourne. When the Tory Cabinet decided upon eating all their words, swallowing all their pledges, and turning their backs upon all their previous convictions, Lord Cranbourne said, "I will have none of it. I will not be a party, as a member of the Tory Cabinet, to pass a Radical measure of reform;" and so he retired; and then when the Bill came up for the third reading, he got up, and in the House of Commons denounced the conduct of Mr. Disraeli in the most emphatic terms. He spoke of it as being most disgraceful to a public man, and he said that his conduct had been a political betrayal of such a character that it was more disgraceful than anything which had occurred within his own memory or for generations past. That was in 1867. In 1874, Mr. Disraeli came to form his Cabinet, and it was a question—a very serious question—whether Lord Salisbury, then in the House of Lords, would be willing to take office. I was told at the time, from quarters likely to be well informed, that Lord Salisbury, with his friends, went into the Cabinet with the determination of keeping Mr. Disraeli straight. They went in, believing that with a majority of Tories in the House of Commons they could prevent Mr. Disraeli from playing any of his fantastic tricks. Now, Mr. Disraeli was obliged to accept the situation. Lord Salisbury went into the Cabinet, and they managed pretty well, by doing nothing at all, to agree. This went on till the end of 1874, when there happened to be a Bill before Parliament upon which Mr. Disraeli and Lord Salisbury held different opinions. It was not a Cabinet measure—it was the Public Worship Regulation Bill. Mr. Disraeli supported it, and Lord Salisbury opposed it; and Lord Salisbury having made some remarks in the House of Lords against the Bill—Lord Salisbury being then, you will remember, a member of the Cabinet—Mr. Disraeli spoke of his noble friend, in another place, as a great master of gibes and jeers, full of manœuvres, which men who knew him in the House of Commons would remember he was quite an adept at; and he hoped that those contemptuous phrases his noble colleague in another place had given utterance to would not lead to the mischief his noble friend wished them to produce by creating division between the two Houses. Do you think, gentlemen, that that was not a natural outpouring of an angry feeling of my Lord Beaconsfield? My Lord Salisbury bided his time; and when Mr. Disraeli—in a weak moment, and yielding to the fascinations of being in a higher and a different place, with a title, determined to make himself a peer, the moment he left the House of Commons, where his position gave him great power in the Cabinet, I have no doubt Lord Salisbury said, "Now, Benjamin, my boy, you are done." So long as Mr. Disraeli was in the House of Commons he wielded far more potentiality than Lord Salisbury possessed; but now that they are both in the House of Lords, and he is brought face to face with the noble, stalwart, and large-headed Lord Salisbury, I will back Lord Salisbury three to one against Mr. Disraeli. Well, now: Lord Salisbury

will, I hope, be able to undo some of the mischief which has been done ; but he cannot do everything. He cannot bring back a great many lives ; he cannot redress a great amount of suffering which has taken place since June last, when so fair an opportunity was offered for the British Government to have arranged the unfortunate affair by joining with Russia for the purpose. Of course, my Lord Beaconsfield does not care twopence, in reality, for the integrity of Turkey. What does he care for, then ? He does not care for that, I believe. I think that in that inscrutable mind of his, in some unaccountable way, there has arisen a very acute attack of Russophobia. I believe that was proved by the speech on the Royal Titles Bill, and I think there can be no doubt that he is suffering at the present moment from the idea that unless he takes this course of supporting the independence and integrity of the Turkish Empire, we shall, in some mysterious way, have the British interests devoured by the Russian bear. Mr. Gladstone, in the pamphlet to which I alluded just now, spoke of the standing hobgoblin of Russia, and said that many a time it had done good service on the stage, but was at present out of repair and unavailable. Mr. Gladstone did not—in fact, he could not—penetrate to the depths of Tory—I was going to say—stupidity, but certainly Tory malimpression. He gave the Tories credit for more good sense than they, unfortunately, possess ; and since Lord Beaconsfield began to give utterance to his Russophobia, we scarcely ever hear an insignificant Tory county member that does not begin to talk about the “ interests of England being threatened,” and I have no doubt that many of you have been seriously alarmed at the pictures the county squires have drawn up in regard to Russian aggression. Why, what do you suppose is the fact ? I will give you one sentence out of a pamphlet that Richard Cobden wrote in 1836, and which has been reprinted, and you can buy it for sixpence. In that pamphlet he gave utterance to words of wisdom and statesmanship, every one of which may be read with advantage at the present day. In that pamphlet he said that during the last 100 years England had, for every square league of territory annexed to Russia by force or violence, appropriated to herself three. Now, what is the fact ? We have been more aggressive than Russia. Russia has not been aggressive upon us at all, and we have not been aggressive upon Russia ; and during the late negotiation I will venture to say, having read the Parliamentary papers with great attention, that Russia has acted throughout in a manner highly creditable to her—perfectly fair and perfectly reasonable, and has evidently had as the main motive for her action, a righteous sympathy with the suffering Christians of the Eastern provinces. Well, now, gentlemen : a most remarkable circumstance occurred in the beginning of November. The Emperor of Russia, who is admitted to be a man and a gentleman of character in every way, sent for the ambassador of England—Lord Augustus Loftus—by whom he sent a message to the Government of England, a message which I venture to say did honour to the Emperor of Russia, as a monarch, as a statesman, and as a Christian. The Emperor regretted to see that there still existed in England an inveterate suspicion of the Russian policy, and a continual fear of Russian aggression. He had on several occasions

given a most solemn assurance that he desired to aim at no aggrandisement, and that he had not the smallest wish or intention to be possessed of Constantinople. Then he completely dissipated the idea about Peter the Great's will, which had been made use of as a bugbear, saying that no such will ever existed. Then the report went on to say, "His Majesty pledged his sacred word of honour, in the most earnest and solemn manner, that he had no intention of acquiring Constantinople, and that if necessity obliged him to occupy a portion of Bulgaria it would only be provisionally, and until the peace and safety of the Christian population were secured. His Majesty could not understand that both countries, with a common object, namely, the maintenance of peace and the amelioration of the Christians—when he had given every proof that he had no desire for conquest or aggrandisement—he could not understand why there could not be a perfect understanding between England and Russia, based on the principles of peace, which would be equally beneficial to themselves and Europe at large." He said, "Nothing could be more absurd with regard to the former; and with regard to the latter I repeat again, with the most solemn assurances, that I entertain neither the wish nor the intention." Now, gentlemen, I ask every one of you—I call you gentlemen, for I know that amongst the working classes of Lancashire, amongst the hard-handed operatives of this county, there are many men of high gentlemanly feeling—I put to you, if anyone of your fellows—a man of good character, a man upon whose word you could rely, against whom there was no black mark—came to you and gave you some protestations of friendship, such as the Emperor of Russia sent to our Government, would not you have met him in the same friendly and confidential spirit? Would you treat that expression of friendship and goodwill with insult? Would not you think that would be a very ungentlemanly course to take? What was the case with the Prime Minister of England when he had that despatch in his book? When he knew of the message of peace and goodwill that the Emperor of Russia had sent to England, was it right for him to get up at the Guildhall Banquet and send back, in reply to that message, a taunt and an insult provocative of war? Speaking of statesmen, whether a statesman was gentlemanly or not was beside the point, but he at least should know how to speak the voice of England, so that it might not be misunderstood. He is entrusted with a great responsibility, and he should at least exercise that responsibility in a manner not calculated to embroil this country with other nations of the world. The *Times* newspaper, the following morning, tried to apologise for Mr. Disraeli's heedless rhetoric, the writer saying that it was an intellectual exercise to track his zig-zag movement as he went flashing about, now here, now there, and never quite where you expected to find him. And this zig-zag statesman, this man flashing here and there, whom nobody can tell where to follow, the people of England are to look at as though they were watching the travelling gyrations of a butterfly. Well, it might be very amusing, but if it so happens that foreign nations do not understand this zig-zag statesman, it may have serious consequences. But for the magnanimity of the Emperor, but for the fact that Mr. Disraeli had been degraded in the eyes of Europe by Mr. Gladstone's noble speeches,

and by the noble utterances of the English people—but for these, Mr. Disraeli's zig-zag utterances might have had a disastrous effect. When I was speaking at Padiham the other day, I said that her Majesty's Government had an ambassador at Constantinople, but the people of England had also their ambassadors in the press spreading over Europe, and in the telegraphs flashing their messages and news from one kingdom to another. We have in these, ambassadors that go to the Courts of Europe, and we are not mocked by mock ambassadors. I find that I shall have to omit very much of what I had intended to say, but I must address myself to the subject, because I believe it is important at the present time that there should be, as far as possible, an expression of public opinion in the direction which we wish the Government should take; and, therefore, I have been anxious, as far as I could, to offer a protest against the language and blundering policy of her Majesty's Government. I will, if you please, pass away from this question of the Russian bug-bear, although I might have said a great deal more upon it. I will revert to the last of the three principles to which I have alluded as being the principles which history has taught us ought to be the principles of our Government's action. I contend that the only safe and honourable policy for Great Britain to pursue is the policy of humanity and of justice. I contend that we ought to hold out our hand to our suffering fellow-Christians in the East. I contend we ought cordially to unite with the Russian Government, or any other European power, with the view of securing the rights of this nationality. I say that this is the only lasting cure; I believe that so long as the Turks have control of these provinces, so long will they commit cruel injustice, and keep down the Christian population under the heel of despotism. Let us remember that we owe a great deal of reparation to these Christian people. By the agreement in 1856, at the time of our Crimean war, when any Christian subject of Turkey was treated with cruelty and injustice, it was said there was power of appeal to the Russian Consul; but we said, "No, we will not allow this Russian interference," and we bore it out by the Crimean war. And from that time to this there has been no power to step forward in aid of those poor wretched people. The British Consul had instructions from the Foreign Office not to report the atrocities, not to let it be known, and the Foreign Office blinded its eyes and stopped its ears against any complaint that might, in any possibility, be made. During these long twenty years there have been an unnumbered multitude of cruel atrocities committed in these countries. We have had our feelings and our attention attracted to the East by means of the Bulgarian atrocities, forgetting that the ordinary life of these people is full of danger, oppression, and injustice. I happened to take up, the other day, a book written in 1862 by the Rev. W. Denton, a clergyman of the Church of England, who went to Servia with a view of looking into matters in connection with the Greek Church, and he wrote a book entitled, "Servia and the Servians." In the course of that book he explains the way in which the Bulgarians were treated—the way in which the Turks treated the Christian populations of the East. He mentioned an instance which had been told him a few days before he wrote the book, and I will give it you in order to show you a specimen

of the mode which the Turks adopt in raising their taxes. The tax-gatherer came to a certain village where there were a number of occupiers of land—peasant proprietors—who were told to raise a certain amount of money towards the tax. They happened to be a Mussulman people, and casting about as to how they should raise this money, one of them suggested that at the outskirts of the village there lived a Christian man who owned a little plot of land, and it was decided that this man should be made to find the money, and that his son, six years of age, should be kept in prison until the full amount of the tax was forthcoming. The *cadi* (the Turkish officer) agreed to this, but the Mussulmans took good care that he should sign a written agreement that they would not be compelled to pay the money again, after the Christian had paid it, and that the village should go free. The young boy was accordingly seized and thrown into prison, and the father, at the end of ten months, by hard labour and self-denial, succeeded in getting his money, which he took to the *cadi*. The father and mother went joyfully expecting to receive again the only prop of their house—that son which they had come to ransom. The prison doors were thrown open, and the boy came forth, a jabbering, senseless idiot. And so he was handed over to his father and mother. The Rev. W. Denton did not witness this spectacle. The British consul stood there with his wife and saw it, but he did not report it to the British Government, though he told it to the Rev. W. Denton, and it is upon the Rev. W. Denton's authority on the consul's word that I have told you this frightful and dreadful thing. I say, if all these atrocities continue, we have no hope of stopping them until we have secured for those provinces an independent government. We must have security of independent government, in order that these provinces may be freed from the barbarous excesses of the Turk. The time was when Greece was under subjection to Turkey. There was a revolution in Greece. There was a struggle for Greek independence. For years that struggle went on, and during its course there were atrocities in the islands of Cyprus and Chios, quite as brutal as the Bulgarian atrocities which had horrified Europe, until, at length, we had in England a foreign minister who had sympathy for the struggling citizens of Greece. I refer to Mr. Canning. He at once sent the Duke of Wellington to the Emperor of Russia, in order that there might be an alliance formed between England and Russia. France afterwards joined the treaty, and the English and French and Russian vessels, forming a combined fleet, went to Greece to put a stop to the outrages carried on there, and to secure the independence of Greece. They put before the Sultan their ultimatum. The Sultan, at this period, refused to adopt the ultimatum laid before him by the Powers to gain time while the Turks were cruelly crushing the very germs remaining of the independence of Greece, until, at length, the British, French, and Russian fleets went to the Turkish fleet that was engaged in devastating the coasts of Greece, and then the commanders of the combined fleet called upon the Turkish fleet to observe this armistice, and to withdraw the Turks on the mainland. The Turks refused to listen to the representations of the combined fleets: the battle of Navarino occurred, and the fleets of Russia, France, and England combined destroyed the Turkish fleet. The effect, in the end,

was that the nation of Greeks that had been for four centuries a nation of slaves became a nation of free men, and England had the glory, through her Foreign Secretary, of leading the van in an action which had such important and beneficial results. Gentlemen, if we are to go back to the traditions of the Foreign Office, let us, at all events, go back to the traditions that will give us honour, and not traditions that will produce discredit; and while it may be impossible, as, unfortunately, it is now, to lead in the van of the Powers for the advantage of the struggling nationalities, let us, at all events, insist that we shall no longer be an impediment or clog, but let us hope that our plenipotentiaries and our Government, called upon, as it has been, by the public opinion of England, may at length join with the other plenipotentiaries and Powers, and may aid in giving independence to these large countries; giving freedom to the people who have been for centuries slaves, enabling them once more to enter upon a career of progress and prosperity, and I think if that is the policy which is now followed by the Government and by Great Britain, when history comes to be written it will be said that Great Britain stood forward in aid of humanity and the Christian religion, and that our nation added one other crown to that testimonial of worth and value which, in past ages, was sacred in the estimation and the gratitude of the world.

No. V.

Annual Address to his Constituents, delivered in the Mechanics' Institution, Burnley, December 17, 1877.

I appear before you with great pleasure to render to you the annual account of my stewardship as member of Parliament for the borough of Burnley. But on looking back at the past session of Parliament I am bound to say that I do not think that our doings in Parliament do us very much credit. I am bound to say that the value of the legislation of the last session of Parliament is not very great. In fact, it has been called a barren Parliament, and that in truth it was. How different the Parliaments of Lord Beaconsfield and those that I remember so well when I was member for Warrington, and when Mr. Gladstone was the Premier of England. I never went before my constituents at Warrington without being able to remind them that during the preceding session Mr. Gladstone's Government had passed some great measure of progress and reform, giving contentment to large masses of the population, and giving promise of future welfare and prosperity to the nation. In fact, the complaint against Mr. Gladstone's Government was that they gave us too much political food. The Tories said that we did so much that the people were tired of it, and the present Government came into power with an entirely different policy, and as they thought that the people of England had been over-surfited by Gladstonian legislation they determined to pass them through a year on dietetic abstinence. Now I recollect there is a story in Don Quixote about Sancho Panza. Sancho Panza was appointed governor of

Barataria. He sat down to a grand banquet, on the tables of which there were a number of tempting viands, but the moment he wished to touch a dish the physician in attendance moved them off the table, because, he said, it was too highly seasoned, or too hot, or too cold to agree with the governor's stomach, and after all these dishes were removed he had to beg and pray that they would give him a few crusts to satisfy his hunger. Now, gentlemen, there has been something of the kind going on in the House of Commons. The provisions that were promised by her Majesty's Government in the Queen's speech, and laid upon the table of the House, were almost all withdrawn during the session, and when private and independent members brought forward very much more substantial political viands the State physicians said they would not agree with the British constitution and ordered them off. The result is that when we look back at the session of Parliament we find, so far as legislation is concerned, the British people are in the same condition as Sancho Panza—they are almost starving. Lord Beaconsfield seems to think we like it. He comes down to the grand dinner of the Lord Mayor, and he there says that everybody is content, everybody is comfortable. He said the people of this country are so contented that you cannot get six men to meet together to discuss a political grievance, and he further claimed for his Government that they had made every class comfortable. Well, that is true, with just a slight exception. They have made every privileged class comfortable; the only class they have not made comfortable is that great class, the mass of the people, who have no privileges. Then, he says, what is quite true, that those privileged classes like being made comfortable a great deal better than being harassed as they were under Mr. Gladstone's Government. I have no doubt that the great landowners are perfectly comfortable under the present Government, but what about the farmers, with a sham Agricultural Holdings Bill? And what about the labourers who are refused a vote and treated like serfs? Are they satisfied? I dare say the church, with all its revenues, and all its advantages, and all its prerogatives and privileges, is satisfied; but what about the Dissenters? What about the Dissenters, who are refused the right to carry into their own graveyards their own religious services? The officers of the army, I dare say, are comfortable. They have obtained promotion, and the Government has just given an extra sop of £500,000 a year, and they are satisfied. There is another great army—the civil servants of the Crown—increasing in numbers, and dipping their hands more deeply into the public purse. They are having advanced salaries and superannuations, and they are comfortable; but what about the taxpayer who pays for all this? Are the taxpayers comfortable when they find that every year they have to pay more taxes in order to satisfy those classes that are made so comfortable by her Majesty's Government, headed by Lord Beaconsfield? This is nothing new. It is the old story of Tory Government. Their policy has always been to make things pleasant all round amongst the people with whom they are connected, and they take very good care that, to the extent of the means that they have in their power, they spend the people's money with a view to gratifying certain large classes connected with the public

services. Of course they have no surplus. You never expect a Tory Government to end the year with any large surplus, as Mr. Gladstone's Government used to do. My hon. friend, Sir U. J. Kay-Shuttleworth, in a most excellent speech which he made to his constituents at Hastings the other day, said a Government surplus was almost becoming as rare a thing as the dodo, and I think the hon. baronet was entirely correct in that statement. I observed the other day a very curious speech made by a gentleman with whom I have the honour to be on friendly terms, I mean Mr. Charley, the member for Salford. Mr. Charley gave a new political definition, which is so original and so unlike anything you may imagine, that I will quote it, and you will hardly believe that he is correct in his definition. He said that Liberalism was progress downwards, and Conservatism was progress upwards. Now I daresay you would not suppose that to be the case, but there is a great truth in Mr. Charley's political definition, and that is in reference to the public expenditure. In that respect the progress of the Liberals is always downwards, and the progress of the Tories invariably upwards. There has been an attempt recently made by various members of the Tory Government and supporters of the Conservative party to make it appear that the Conservative expenditure has not been considerably in excess of the Liberal expenditure, and they mention, what is true, that in looking at the expenditure of the country and the amount raised by the country you must take off for the post office, telegraph service, and other receipts of that character not in the nature of taxation. Now, I am quite prepared to meet them on that ground, and I hold in my hand a return made entirely upon that basis, in which only the taxes taken out of the people's pockets are reckoned. I find that in 1869-70, before the Franco-German War, and when Mr. Gladstone's Government had been in office a year, the expenditure was £58,694,000, raised by absolute taxation from the pockets of the people. In 1873-4 it had just increased £1,000,000, with the expenses connected with the additions to the army and navy at the time of the Franco-German War, the expenditure then amounting to £59,773,000, whereas this year the total expenditure, under the Tory Government, chargeable upon the taxes and not upon the Post Office and Revenue Department, amounts to £65,044,000. That is to say, there has been an addition of more than five millions sterling a year imposed upon the taxpayers of this country. These figures are taken from Parliamentary returns, and upon them there can be no question whatever. But when the Tories come to compare 1873-4—that is the last year of Mr. Gladstone's Government—with the present year, they always include in the comparison £3,200,000 paid in 1873-4 by Mr. Gladstone's Government for the Alabama award, and put that in the statement in order to make it appear that the Tory Government are not spending as much as they really are. It is unfair for any comparison to be made which does not take into account the Alabama claims we paid out of the revenue of the country instead of laying on taxes for the amount. Why now, gentlemen, the fact is, we know where this money goes to. A great part of it goes to the army and navy, and the amount is continually increasing. In 1870-1 the Gladstone Government paid for the army

and navy expenditure twenty millions and a half, and the Conservative Government are paying for the army and navy twenty-four millions and a half. Now, gentlemen, of course you pay this money, and you have a right to inquire what you get in return for this large expenditure. What is your intention with regard to this expenditure? You have about 120,000 men for it; what do you want to do with them? Do you want to go on the Continent and interfere in Continental matters, and fight battles on the Continent? If you do you must have a larger army than you have now—you cannot go with your small force to interfere in Continental affairs, and the sooner you give it up the better. If you don't want to meddle with other people's affairs—and I hope you have too much sense to do anything of the kind—you have too many men, and spend too much money. I am glad to say that we are in a position in which we are impregnable. The present war has already shown us that volunteers armed with rifles of precision, and behind earthworks that could easily be raised—that volunteers under these circumstances are a most deadly foe to attack. In fact, I noticed a statement the other day in the papers by a gentleman who happens to be of the same name—in fact, a relation of my opponent, a man of great authority in military matters, and a man of high standing in connection with the army. I mean Colonel Lloyd Lindsay; and he does not hesitate to say that one of the great lessons of the war is to teach us what a volunteer can do in defending a position. We have a large volunteer force, we have a large militia force, we have torpedoes to defend our coast, powerful artillery, and in fact we are prepared in every way it is possible to conceive, so that you are perfectly safe from any attack with a much smaller expenditure on the army than we have at present. But instead of reducing our army expenditure the Conservative Government are going on increasing it. I said just now the Government have been giving a sop to the army. I will tell you what it is, though you will scarcely believe it. You remember that in Parliament under the Gladstone Government there was a measure brought forward to abolish purchase in the army. It was a most excellent measure. The only thing I objected to do was to pay to the officers in the army over regulation prices, which I thought they ought not to do. We were told that as the result of the abolition of purchase in the army we should have men of the best ability and of the best character that we could get; that instead of good men having commissions bought over their heads, they would have to get on by merit and attention to their duty, and gradually rise in the army. We paid all this money expecting that we should get the best men in the army, and that, having got good men as officers, they would be promoted according to their merit. That was what we wanted. But we have got at the head the Duke of Cambridge, who hated the policy of promotion—who resisted it, and refused to carry out the intentions of Parliament, so far as promotion by merit was concerned. And so the promotion in the army has gone on by seniority, to a very great extent, and there has been no encouragement given to any young man to lay himself out for superior conduct in the army, because he would have no advantage whatever against some lazy dullard whose services in the army were not of the slightest value. Well, as a matter

course, when this is the case you will quite understand that there is great cause of complaint already. These officers having pocketed large prices, make a complaint that the promotion is not going on quick enough, because there is no promotion except by seniority, and that is very slow. What did this present Government do then? Just at the fag-end of the last session of Parliament, when the House was wearied and tired, and when we were all going home, the Government came down to the House one day and announced that it was the intention of her Majesty's Government to recommend the Queen to issue a Royal Warrant for the promotion of retirement in the army, the effect of which would be to saddle the country with an additional expenditure ultimately of half a million a year. We had no time to discuss it, but we discussed it as well as we could, and I assisted my hon. friend, Mr. Trevelyan, in addressing the House against this gross and infamous jobbery, and, as I call it, a robbery of the people of this country by an expenditure of money which I declare in my conscience will not tend to the efficiency of the army, but rather in the contrary direction. You may suppose, possibly, that the object of this was to induce a number of old or inferior officers to retire in order to get out of the way for the energetic and able young men. Nothing of the sort. The object of part of the great scheme is to retire what they call the lower ranks of the army, not by any principle of selection, but by mere hap-hazard; and it may happen that a young man of 38, under this scheme, with all the energy and ability of his position, and the vigour of his age, may be compelled to retire from the army and be paid a handsome sum for doing so, whilst the most stupid may be retained, and the good man will be lost and the stupid man retained. How can you suppose that a scheme can be a wise one, the effect of which, in driving men out of the army, makes no selection between good men, efficient officers, and inefficient officers; and yet this scheme is to cost us so large a sum of money. Some of the greatest generals supported the plan of re-organisation, but the Duke of Cambridge set all his interest against it, and just as he has always been opposed to any reform in the army, he is still opposed to re-organisation—he only wants to get more pay and more promotion, and if it costs twenty millions sterling a year I believe he is perfectly indifferent. If this scheme goes on, and if our army be called on to contend against any foreign army, I believe we might find that some very serious mistake had been made, tending to destroy the efficiency of the army of Great Britain. Mr. William Henry Smith, the First Lord of the Admiralty, a person for whom I entertain the highest respect, justifies this great expenditure of the Government upon another ground, and the ground he justifies it upon is this: he says the present Government have granted large sums of money out of Imperial taxation, in order to relieve local burdens. That is perfectly true, but I want, upon that subject, to say a few words, because it is a matter that I think is very interesting to all parties who occupy houses in town, and to parties who are paying themselves in the general taxation of the country. Now, when a local rate is laid upon property, if it is laid upon land in the country—I am now speaking rather roughly, but still strictly correct—the owner of the land ultimately pays the rate. That is to say, suppose it is highway rates or

poor rates, or any other rate laid upon land in the country, the land is taken subject to these rates, and the rent is diminished in consequence of the rates imposed upon the land, so that, in fact, as you will understand, if the landowner could go into the market with his land, and could let it free from rates, the farmer would pay more per acre for that land than if the farmer had to pay a certain amount of rates upon it. The farmer, when he takes land, always reckons the amount of rates he has to pay upon it. But it is very different with cottages. There the occupier pays the rates, and not the owner. Even if the owner compounds with the rate, it comes out of the occupier's pockets in the long run. In the case of land you have a fixed quantity, and therefore the price of land is not in any way affected; but in the case of cottages, when a man builds he expects to get a certain income from the outlay upon the cottages, and if cottages do not pay sufficient income people will not build any more until the number drops and the price of cottages rises. Now, I think you will see that, inasmuch as the owner of the cottage has to consider whether the amount will pay him for the outlay, it is the tenant who has to pay the rates and taxes, and that the owner of land pays the rates and taxes—that, in point of fact, the great relief of local taxation goes into the pockets of the owners of the land. Because, suppose you pay a million out of the public funds to the relief of local taxation, you have to raise that million in taxes of some other character. Now, I will tell you what is the fact. Roughly speaking, in the taxes imposed—the Imperial taxes imposed for the expenditure of the country—about one-fifth comes out of land, and about four-fifths out of trade and industry, so that what these landowners mean when they cry out about relief is this: that every million they take off local taxation is so much of a relief to their own pockets; they take it from a fund they mainly pay to, and they throw the burden upon a fund, four-fifths of which is paid by some one else, that is, the industry, and labour, and trade of the country. Now, gentlemen, you will quite understand that the fact of throwing, as these Tories have done, something like £4,300,000 off the burden of real property, landed property, mainly in the country, and throwing it upon the general taxation of the kingdom, has been so far to add very materially to the burden which is placed upon trade and industry. And let me tell you, further, gentlemen, that they take a certain amount and give a certain grant to local rates, but what do they do at the same time? They take from the people local control. The Government never give a grant of a million of money to local rates without taking care that they will retain in their own hands very considerable power over the expenditure of that money. What do they do then? The moment any expenditure gets into the hands of the Government you have not the same thought of economy and watching that you have by your local administrators, but you have a great army of state officials who rush in for the plunder, and they very soon swell up the expenditure to a very much greater sum than it was before, so that, though a million may be saved to the local rates, it may end in a million and a half being charged to the Imperial exchequer. And unfortunately by giving this bribe of relief from local taxation, we are drawing more and more from local ability and local

energy, the management of some of the important matters which have to do with our daily existence. Gentlemen, it was upon that principle—that this was a short-sighted policy—that I resisted the Prisons Bill of the Government when it was brought forward last session. I got very little support from the landowners, because they said the farmers were anxious to have this relief to local taxation, and so the measure was passed, and the Home Secretary tried to persuade the House that there is to be some considerable saving in the management of the prisons. But I do not hesitate to pledge my judgment, from a careful consideration of the matter, that when you get the expenditure of the prisons fully developed under the manipulations of the National Government, so far from being any economy, you will find a great increase in the expenditure of the country in the end, by swelling up the great army of the civil servants of the Crown. Living in London as I do, and mixing as I do in society of various kinds, I know the power that these men have over the press of the kingdom, and I know there is not a man who dare stand up and dare to protect the public purse from being rifled, but there will be a number of pens dipped in vinegar, that are employed on the daily and other press of the country, being used against him. I know I have suffered because I have ventured to be independent on this subject. You know how I have been misrepresented in *Punch* and other publications of the day. But I have always this confidence, that I have at my back an intelligent and enlightened constituency, who will never allow their member to be lampooned out of his just influence by a number of base scribes who have an interest in keeping up public expenditure. There is a wonderful contrast between the budget speeches of the Chancellor of the Exchequer at the beginning of the last session, and the budget speeches that used to be delivered in the days of Mr. Gladstone's administration. I recollect how the whole of the House then listened intently to hear what taxes were to be repealed. We knew from year to year there would be some boon given to the public. Nothing of the kind in the last budget. No; the Tories sat there. I can see them in my imagination now, on the tiptoe of excitement, not expecting any relief of taxation, but anxious there should be no new taxes put on; and when the Chancellor of the Exchequer, by a careful arrangement of figures, said that there was an equilibrium between the expenditure and income, and said, "I think it is well, it is a good thing to let well alone," the cheering of those Tories was most hearty and cordial, because they were so relieved that the Government had not put on a new tax. Well they might be relieved, because they knew that if the Government had put on a new tax it would have been a very serious blow to them as a party, and they were therefore very anxious there should be no new taxes put on. I have very good ground for the belief that when the Cabinet met, before the budget was prepared, to consider the expenditure for the year, a very great man indeed in the Cabinet put his foot down very hard indeed and said, "If you put on new taxes you will sign our death warrant." Well, now, gentlemen, they did not put on new taxes, and they avoided the necessity for doing so by cutting down their expenditure, just to the point they had money to pay for. And then they turned round and claimed it as a great dis-

tion, and said, "Look how we have kept our expenditure down." No thanks to them, gentlemen. We have heard of the devil turning monk when he was sick, and this economy on the part of the Government is very much of the same character; they were economical because they had no money, so that they could not spend more. I shall now leave the question of expenditure, and glance very hastily at two or three measures discussed during the session. First, is the Government Burials Bill. That did not come into the House of Commons, but it did come before the House of Lords, and certainly its provisions were of a most marvellous character. In the first place, ignoring the fact that all classes of the community have a right to the use of these parochial burial grounds, the Government proposed that in districts where there was only one burial ground, and that connected with the Church, the ratepayers should pay for a cemetery, though the churchyard might be sufficient for the inhabitants of the district, and it was calculated that it would have cost the country something like three millions sterling to provide these grounds for the purpose of keeping the Dissenters from intruding into the burial grounds to which they had a right. They had another ingenious device for meeting the demands of the Dissenters. They said, "Yes, you may bury your dead without the presence of a clergyman of the Church of England, but you shall lower them into the grave in perfect silence; you shall bury them into your own burial ground, but you shall bury them like dogs." That was rather too much for the Archbishops, and some of the excellent Bishops of the Church of England, and I am glad to say, for that admirable prelate, the Bishop of Manchester. Some of the Conservative peers also could not stand this bigotry, and so Lord Harrowby proposed an amendment giving the right to interment in parochial burying grounds. That was carried in the House of Lords, and the Government immediately dropped the bill. But they have not dropped the difficulty, gentlemen. It is staring them in the face. What are they to do with it next session? They cannot let it rest. One of their members, Lord John Manners, the other day, complained that the leaders of the Church had deserted them. I find that a memorial signed by great numbers of clergymen and laymen has intimated to the Government very strongly indeed that yielding on this point will be considered a betrayal of the duty the Government owes to the Church. I know it will not be an easy matter for them to settle. Some Tory members tell you—"We hope the Government won't touch it; they have no right to do so; if there is to be a surrender of the rights and privileges of the Church of England, let it be by the Liberal party and not by the Tory party. The Tory party have already done too much, and we don't want them to do it." You may rely upon it it will not be an easy nut for Lord Beaconsfield to crack. There was another question introduced—the county franchise and the redistribution of seats. I need hardly say I supported that motion with the greatest satisfaction, as I had in mind the large number of intelligent and competent men shut out of the franchise, as the county franchise was placed so high. But I am obliged to hurry on, though you may be quite sure that so far as I am concerned I would be happy to promote that measure to the best of my ability. Another

subject which came before us last session was the Indian import duties, and that is a subject which is particularly interesting to Burnley people. The Indian import duties, as you are all perfectly well aware, impose a duty on English cotton goods going into India, and inasmuch as goods of the same character are manufactured in India, the effect of this duty is to put a protection, in favour of the Indian manufacturers, against your manufacturers in Burnley. It is quite clear that that is a policy that is altogether unjustifiable, and which is contrary to the principles of political economy. The Government, through Lord Salisbury, said these import duties should be repealed as soon as the revenue of India would allow of it being done. Now, gentlemen, let me say to you that that will never be so long as the Indian Government is administered in the way it is at present. Now, I took the trouble this morning to look at the Parliamentary returns upon the state of Indian finance, and I find that the expenditure of the Indian Government is increasing from year to year; that in ten years, from 1866 to 1875, which is the last date that I have in my returns, the expenditure of the Indian Government has increased from £46,169,152 to £54,500,542. Where does all this money go to? Well, a large amount of it goes to the army, but another very large amount of it goes in the form of the increase of the income and in appointment of civil servants of the Crown. The fact is that India is treated very much as a milch cow, and is drained as close and as dry as those people can manage. The time was, you can remember—you who remember reading the history of India—when people went out to India and came back rich nabobs, taking advantage of their position to plunder people and princes. Well, now it is not done in that gross brigand kind of way, but is done by the ingenious device of increasing the Civil Service and expenditure. What do I find expended for this purpose? Why, I find in administration charges, which include the salaries of large numbers of officials in India, there is an increase of £700,000; political agencies, £150,000; professional services, £2,000,000; and superannuation allowances and pensions have increased during the ten years £900,000, or nearly a million sterling; so that the total increase which has been raised by the administrators of this empire from the people of India has amounted to £3,750,000. With that increase in the course of the last ten years, what chance have you of getting these duties repealed if this goes on? If they wanted to repeal these Indian import duties as strongly as they want to increase their own incomes, you would have them repealed next year. I say to them, “I don’t believe in the anxiety you profess; if you are anxious to repeal these Indian import duties, cut down this greatly increasing expenditure”—expenditure, mark you, wrung from some of the most wretched peasantry in the world. There has been another question upon which I must say a few words. Not only are the Indian Government spending these enormous sums of money more than in former years—they are neglecting some of their duties as administrators of this great empire. You were all startled, and all your benevolent feelings were excited by the intelligence that reached you a few months since of that terrible famine in the Madras Presidency. It was a famine which aroused all our sympathies, but it was only one in continuation of a number of famines.

that have taken place before. In 1837-8 there was a great famine, in which the deaths amounted to 800,000. There was another famine 1860-1. There was the Bengal famine in 1863. In 1868-9 there was a famine, and 1,250,000 people perished. And in this year it is supposed that half-a-million people have perished. From careful calculations it is estimated that at least three and a half millions of our people have perished by famine in India during the last twenty years. Can you realise it, gentlemen? We think a great deal of this war, and a horrible war it is, with a great destruction of life; but what is it compared with a famine desolating one of those great tracts of country in India, where there is a great population, a teeming population of millions depending upon the fruits of the earth. There comes this dry season with arid land and brazen sky, the food of the people disappears, and then you gradually see one after another, then hundreds after hundreds, then thousands after thousands of worn wretched creatures sinking and dying in the road—men, women, and children at the breast, all forming one great picture of sadness and of death. Can you imagine anything more horrible than that? And think of what it means? Entirely to destroy the fruits of the earth is to make this great district of country unable to aid the revenue of the Crown by paying taxes; unable to give any contribution to State funds, and forced to appeal to the State for some charitable assistance. But the belief is, and I concur entirely in that belief, that with proper administration these famines ought not to occur. This Government of ours goes on from year to year, knowing that periodically these famines will occur, and yet, with that full knowledge, not even attempting to take the means which in the best judgment of those well acquainted with the question would seem to be probable means of preventing these dreadful visitations. Gentlemen, would you believe it, that in some portions of the Madras presidency, where this half a million of human beings have been cut down, not by a pestilence, but by the disappearance of food leading to famine and death—would you believe it that in certain portions of this Madras presidency there are districts where there was abundance, where the country was sending forth its usual crops of grain, and where the people were happy and contented, and not only able to keep themselves from starvation and death, but to send a portion of their produce to the other districts, in order to aid them in their distress? Would you believe that that is possible; I can tell you that it was so, and I will tell you why it was so. In those particular districts where there was this plenty, and these blessings enjoyed by the inhabitants, it was so simply because of certain works of irrigation, certain canals cut through this country. As in rainy seasons there was a plentiful supply of water, the canals secured a plentiful supply, also in dry seasons when many elsewhere died for want of rain. These works have been paying-ones; they have paid well upon the money invested in them; and, yet, notwithstanding all this, and notwithstanding the fact that Sir Arthur Cotton, who was speaking at Manchester a few days ago, has been urging this upon the Government year after year, and has published pamphlets—he sent me his pamphlet the other day, and I read it with the utmost astonishment, the facts he states being almost

incredible—he has been publishing these pamphlets, and yet these officials, like all Government officials, have disregarded them, and allowed millions to die of famine, because they say Sir Arthur Cotton is a man of one idea, and an enthusiastic man. Gentlemen, I wish to point out to you that instead of spending money in works of irrigation that might have saved so large a number of lives, they have been spending large sums upon railways in India. They have spent, I believe, something like £160,000,000 upon railways, which, to a certain extent, are useful, but which do not fill up the great demand of the country for irrigation and carrying purposes as canals would. But, gentlemen, those railways are military necessities. We, as the Government of England, we, as the people of England, possess India. By what right do we possess India? Just by the same right that Russia possesses Central Asia—by the right of the sword and by conquest. Why, if you look back and consider what has been done by this country, perhaps you will see many transactions of a hundred years ago with some shame and regret. But at all events, we have got possession of India. Let us, then, feel this great responsibility as a nation, that we ought to govern India in such a way as to promote the welfare, and happiness and prosperity of the 250 millions that are now subject to the British Crown. And let us remember that while we are so fulfilling a great, a holy, a Christian duty, we are at the same time doing much to promote our own interests, for you cannot develop the prosperity of India, but you develop the demand for British industry, and so you yourselves will be benefited while you are giving blessings to those people who are fellow-subjects of your own. The mention of Russia and India naturally leads me to the question which has absorbed a very large amount of attention, both in Parliament and out of it, during the last session—I mean the question of the war between Russia and Turkey; and although I am afraid I may be occupying your attention rather too long, I will, if you will allow me, make some remarks upon the Eastern question; and in considering the position of the Eastern question, in Parliament and out of it, I cannot help alluding to what has been a remarkable incident, causing a change in the complexion of the House of Commons this session as compared with last. At the time that I had the honour of delivering my last annual address to my constituents that incident had just occurred. Mr. Disraeli, who in former years had occupied a seat on the Treasury Bench in the House of Commons, and had there shone with the brilliancy and with the erratic motions of a meteor, was transferred to another sphere, and now twinkles like a fixed star in the firmament of the House of Lords. Gentlemen, I confess that it was not to me a matter of any personal regret that Mr. Disraeli was removed to another sphere, and I think that on public grounds it has been a positive advantage, because his mischievous influence and activity appear to have been somewhat smothered under the earl's coronet and ermine robes of my Lord Beaconsfield. I daresay you will recollect that in my speech I expressed a belief that his elevation to the House of Lords would considerably impair his influence for mischief. Well, I think, Mr. Mayor, that I have been justified in

my anticipation. I think there can be no doubt that during the past session Lord Beaconsfield has exercised a less control over the policy and over the Councils of the Cabinet than he has done on former occasions. But unfortunately the mischief had already been done. The mischief was done last year by the Government, at the time that Mr. Disraeli took an active part in its proceedings in regard to the Eastern Question. Now, the Government claim for themselves credit on two grounds. They first of all say that they claim credit for their non-intervention in the struggle, and, secondly, for having kept us out of the war. I wish to ask this question : Are the Government justified in any such claim to praise or to credit? Why, during the most critical periods in 1875-6, the Government did intervene in this affair. But they intervened on the wrong side. They were the bottle holder of Turkey, and there can be no doubt whatever—because the Blue Books prove it—that Mr. Disraeli and Sir Henry Elliott, in intimate communication with each other, did their best to support Turkey and to resist the demands of united Europe. Now, gentlemen, I believe that England was rapidly drifting into war on the side of Turkey, and I have no doubt whatever that but for the Bulgarian atrocities exciting so strong a feeling throughout the country, and but for the noble and eloquent speeches of Mr. Gladstone—I believe that the Government would have carried us into one of the most wicked and scandalous wars in which this country could possibly engage. Gentlemen, they claim credit for having kept us out of war. Well, if they had carried us into that war I think they would have deserved impeachment. But they have not, they say, carried us into war. No doubt one of the first interests of this country is peace, but not alone a peace between this country and other countries, though that, of course, is the first consideration, but we have the greatest possible interest in the peace of Europe. I charge upon the Government that they have failed in keeping the peace of Europe. I venture to say that if they had adopted a firm and straightforward policy at the first they might have prevented war between Russia and Turkey. The way to prevent war between Russia and Turkey was for the Government to have maintained the European concert ; to have given every encouragement to the united action of Europe ; to have let the Turks understand clearly that this was a matter in which Europe would act together. And was that the course Lord Beaconsfield took? Why, from the very first, during the insurrection in Bosnia and Herzegovina, he took the side of the Turks, who were putting the insurrection down with the greatest cruelty and force. With regard to the Berlin Memorandum, he made a boast in the House of Commons that England had prevented the united action of the Great Powers. Then, you remember that the Servians rose against Turkey, and went into a war which was excited by strong sympathy for their fellow-Christians in the adjoining province. Lord Beaconsfield, in his Aylesbury speech, denounced the Servians with the fiercest possible utterances, and it was quite clear that, if he could, he would have crushed them to the dust. Do you not remember those rhodomontades with which that fleet of ours was sent to Besika Bay under the pretence to protect British interests in Turkey, whereas it was known throughout Europe, and it was intended

by the Government themselves, that it should be an intimation to Russia that, if it went further, the British fleet was there in order to protect the Sultan in his power? Do you not remember that at the very beginning of the present session of Parliament her Majesty the Queen had put into her mouth words about maintaining the independence and integrity of Turkey? I say, gentlemen, that this policy of the Government has been a tortuous policy—may I coin a word, and say it was a Disraelitish policy? And it was a policy which did not prevent war, but really led Turkey into this war—and probably into a very serious difficulty as a nation. Well, gentlemen, in view of these atrocities and of the conduct of Turkey to the Christian race, the Tories are constantly saying we have no right to have a humanitarian policy. They say we have no right to go over the world in a crusade in favour of humanity. But there are certain crimes against humanity; and when these crimes against humanity occur, it becomes the duty of all civilised nations to put a stop to these crimes. There is a point in reference to this particular crime of Turkey rendering us responsible. Turkey, you will recollect, was really a creature of our own. She would not have had the power to have committed these atrocities if we had not fought the Crimean war and kept her on her legs. She would not have had the power to resist the will of Europe if we had not lent her some millions of money in order to buy a fleet and weapons of war; so that, in fact, to a great extent, England was responsible for the position of Turkey. After those atrocities had excited so great an amount of public feeling, the Government did come down to the House, and they declared that they did, to use Mr. Cross's words "feel a detestation of the horrors committed in Turkey." What did they do to prevent her—to stop her? I do not know if you have heard, as I have, of a man who went up and down the country offering to sell pills to cure earthquakes. It seems to me Lord Derby's panacea to cure the Turkish atrocities was about as impracticable and inefficient as pills to cure earthquakes. No, gentlemen; we are responsible in a special degree for Turkey. We cannot get out of that, and with all the other civilised nations of Europe we are clearly responsible, to some extent, for not using our influence to put a stop to these crimes against humanity. Let me recall to you an incident of recent history. About sixty years ago there was a great number of atrocities being perpetrated by one of the Mohammedan race—one of the vassals of the Sultan of Turkey, the Dey of Algiers. The Dey of Algiers, in those days, had a fleet of corsairs. These corsairs had been, for many generations past, in the practice of roving about the coast of the Mediterranean, and of seizing by force women and girls to be sold into slavery. Christian women and girls were seized by these corsairs and were sold as slaves for infamous purposes to Mohammedan rich men who wanted to buy slaves of that character. Lord Liverpool was at that time the Premier of England. There had been a large number of remonstrances, and there had been negotiations without end with the Dey at Algiers, but, just as the Sultan had done, he paid no attention to them, and refused to give up this criminal practice. At length Lord Exmouth arrived with the Mediterranean Squadron, and when the Dey was still obstinate, destroyed his fleet: the Dey at once undertook that Christian

slavery should cease for ever, and there were thousands of these poor creatures, women and children, released from this horrible slavery and restored to their country and their friends. And I notice, in looking at the account in Alison's History of Europe, what Alison said of the victory of Lord Exmouth. He said it was one of those moments which makes a man proud of his country and of the human race. Suppose Lord Liverpool had adopted the plan of Lord Beaconsfield—the plan which Lord Beaconsfield adopted in regard to the Sultan of Turkey—suppose he had sent an ambassador to the Dey of Algiers, with Algerine proclivities, in order to remonstrate with the Dey of Algiers upon his wicked practices; and then suppose he had sent an unarmed vessel, with a missionary on board, to read the Ten Commandments to the pirates. Slavery would have been going on from that day to this. So far as our interests are concerned, you cannot deal with things in that way. But the truth is, we should not have needed to exercise force, if England had gone heartily into this matter with the other Powers. Turkey would have seen there was no chance whatever in resisting a combination of strength; and I have no doubt whatever they would have submitted, and we should have had a great improvement in the condition of things in the East, and have been saved this frightful war. The war did take place. But this was not the only thing that Lord Beaconsfield proposed by his policy. He proposed to maintain the integrity and independence of the Turkish Empire. Where has that gone to now, gentlemen? Do you suppose that anybody now will say that we must maintain the independence and integrity of the Turkish Empire? That, at all events, is one of the objects that the Government had in view, which there is no chance of having secured. Another object was to check the influence of Russia in the East. But they have gone exactly the way to increase the influence of Russia in the East. Why, if we had taken Russia by the hand in this matter, and if we had aided in giving independence and national life to these great Christian provinces of Turkey, we should have attached them to our interests, and we should have received from them, in future years, the advantage of this attachment. But, gentlemen, we have done nothing of the kind. We have shown the most selfish and cynical indifference to these struggling nationalities of Turkey, and we have therefore left them entirely in the hands of Russia. We have, as I have already said, lured Turkey to destruction. I believe Turkey would not have entered into this war unless the Sultan and his ministers had expected that we should soon be found fighting on their side. Well, now, gentlemen: we are coming very near to the end of this great struggle. It is quite clear now what that end will be. It is quite clear that Russia will conquer Turkey, and that the time will come—and that soon—when there will be some arrangement in reference to the Turkish Empire. I see in the papers this morning that Turkey is already crying to the European Powers for mediation. But let us remember this—that 20 years ago Turkey had a new term of existence granted to her under solemn conditions, in which she undertook that she would treat her Christian subjects justly and rightfully. Remember that we gave this opportunity to Turkey, for 20 years, so to reform her institutions,

and so to reform her national life, that she might fairly claim to take her place amongst European nations. But they failed in that term of probation ; and when these horrible massacres occurred, and when it became a crying shame throughout Europe that Turkey was crushing down her Christian population, then it was that the Court of Justice was established, and then it was that in Constantinople, before the representatives of the great Powers of Europe, England being worthily represented by Lord Salisbury, Turkey was brought to the common bar—the European bar of justice. All that could be said in her favour was heard. What could be said against her was presented at that Court, and the decision of that Court was a decided decision. It was a decision condemning Turkey—calling upon her, in fact, to make restitution, and to take a course which would give security to her suffering subjects. Turkey treated that judgment of the High Court of European justice with contempt and with scorn. It would have been proper, no doubt, for that Court so constituted and represented by these great Powers, to have had some minister of justice that would deal with this great criminal. But there were some of the members of it who did not want the decision of the Court to be carried out, and so it was at length that Russia volunteered, acting upon her own instance, and lifted up her arm to execute the judgment of the Court. Do not forget, when things are said about Russia, that Russia was only fulfilling the decision of the Court of Europe, in which we formed part ; and bear in mind this also, the Conservatives say (I have heard very many of the Conservative members in the House of Commons say it) that there is no difference between Greek Christians and Turkish Mohammedans ; and they say that all this pretended sympathy of the Slavonic race, and of the Greek Christians of Russia, towards those of their own blood and of their religion in the Turkish provinces, is all a pretence and unreality—that there is no such sympathy among these religionists, because, they say, their religion is a superstition. Mr. Mayor, those men that so speak do not recognise as they ought the enormous power of the religious sentiment, whether it is a true religion or a false religion. It is not a question whether it is a true religion or a false religion ; but if there is a common religious sentiment, a common religious motive, you will find large bodies of men rushing together, under a powerful impulse, either to protect their particular faith, or in some way or other to promote its interests. That is so, even in religions that are in no sense Christian. But when I hear Conservatives and Churchmen—when I hear men that set themselves up as being in some way or other the protectors of the Bible and of religion in this country—when I hear men say that there is no difference between the Greek Christians, with their superstitions, and the Mohammedans, I feel ashamed that Englishmen should have such a low idea of the Christian religion and of the Christian spirit. Gentlemen, I have no sympathy with that view. I believe that in all branches of the Christian Church there may be superstitions, there may be something of ignorance, there may be a good deal of materialism ; but there is that spirit of Christ which shines through even a darkened medium, and I for one will never consent to believe that even Greek Christians are as bad or as degraded or as unworthy of notice as the

Mohammedan body of people. Gentlemen, I have spoken of the influence of Christianity as a motive power in sympathy, binding—as I believe it does bind—these Christian races together, and furnishing a spirit for action on the part of the Greek Christians of Russia. And let me say this—I say it without hesitation—that the evidence of history, the evidence of facts under our notice at the present moment, proves that the Greeks of Turkey are the only progressive population of Turkey; that they are increasing while the Mohammedans are decreasing; that the Greek Christians form, in point of fact, the only element of permanence in Turkey, and give promise that, if they have fair play, although they are much deteriorated in character by centuries of oppression, yet they do give promise, if that oppression is thrown from their necks, that in future years they may become a great and prosperous nation; and I believe if we, as a nation—if we as the Liberal party, by our voice and instrumentality in any way help on that great consummation, we shall act in a manner worthy of the Christian religion, in the interests of British commerce, and for the prosperity of mankind.

No. VI.

*Speech to the Liberal Electors of Burnley, delivered in the Circus,
March 18, 1880.*

Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen,—For the last two or three years the Liberal party have been continually calling upon Lord Beaconsfield to dissolve Parliament, and we have done so on the ground that Lord Beaconsfield was carrying out a foreign policy of a dangerous and adventurous character, a policy of which the people had no idea when the Parliament was elected in 1874; and, therefore, we said that the Parliament of England had no right to trifle with the interests of the English people until, at least, the electors of England had had a voice in the constitution of the Parliament. Gentlemen, the Tories disregarded our claims; and when, last autumn, Mr. Gladstone, in his magnificent orations in Scotland, charged Lord Beaconsfield with acting contrary to constitutional usage in prolonging Parliament to the 7th session, how was he met? He was met by ministers of the Crown going up and down the country and saying that they wanted a session of Parliament—a useful session—to pass a number of home measures of reform that were pressing for attention. Well, gentlemen, Parliament were summoned together in order to have a useful session to pass some good measures of home reform. I went, as your representative, to London to attend the opening of Parliament, and to take my part in passing those useful measures of home reform; and when we met together the Queen delivered a speech—that is to say, she came down to the House of Lords. Her speech was read by the Lord Chancellor; and in a clause of the speech she called the attention of her faithful Commons and Parliament to these “useful measures of home reform.” And these were the words that were put into the mouth of Her Most Gracious Majesty

by my Lord Beaconsfield. I, of course, am not going to read to you the whole of the Queen's Speech, but that part of it to which reference was made to the useful session that was to be opened. The Queen said, "My Lords and Gentlemen: I trust you will be able to resume the consideration of the Criminal Code, and of the improvement of the law of bankruptcy. Bills will be laid before you enlarging the powers of owners of settled land, for consolidating and amending the lunacy laws, and for simplifying the practice of conveyancing. I commend to you these and other measures which may be submitted for your consideration, and I trust that the blessing of the Almighty will direct your labours." Gentlemen, if that was not impiety to put in the mouth of the Queen the prayer of God when they intended that Parliament should not continue, I say I know nothing of what impiety is. Now, gentlemen: we met, and these bills were laid upon the table, and they were referred to select committees; and we had been together a month, and had done very little, when there was the announcement of a dissolution of Parliament. Well, I say that in the course the Government have taken about this dissolution, it seems to me they have just taken the same course which they have taken in many other instances, and that is a course which seems as though they could not go on straight, but were what the Americans call "slantindicular" politicians. Well, now, gentlemen: I can imagine some innocent Conservative saying, "Oh, but when they put those words into the Queen's mouth, and when they made the speeches about useful legislation of home reform," I daresay some innocent Conservative might say, "they had made up their mind at that time to go on, but something has occurred which has changed their minds." Gentlemen, I don't believe they ever meant to keep Parliament together; but we will leave that on one side. Why do they dissolve if they intended Parliament to keep together? (A voice: "They were flooded out," and laughter.) Well, my friend says they were flooded out. They certainly brought in a very remarkable water bill, and my hon. friend, one of the best members in the House of Commons—Sir Charles Dilke—said, "Well, the Government have performed a most wonderful phenomenon, for they have scalded their fingers with cold water." This Bill did not affect you in Burnley, but I can tell you that if you had a Town Council that blundered in making a bargain in the way this Government has blundered, you would kick them out, and send them through the streets of Burnley as a set of men who are not fit to conduct your business. Why, the fact is, the Government agreed to purchase the waterworks of London on terms of which I am afraid to say how much they were in excess of the value, but it will suffice for me to say that the shares of the Waterworks Companies went up 70 or 75 per cent.—nearly double the value—in consequence of the purchase the Government intended to make. Whether it was somebody about the offices of Government who let out what was going on, I don't know, but a number of knowing people bought a lot of these shares and made a very large sum of money out of them. There was a stock-jobbing transaction in these shares of a most discreditable character; and, gentlemen, I am bound to say—while I do not charge any member of the Government, for a moment, with being guilty of having

been connected with them—that several transactions of the Government have been made opportunities of very great stock-jobbing transactions. The Suez Canal shares were made opportunities of stock-jobbing in Egyptian funds, and so were other matters the Government have dealt with. What I want to say to you about this Water Bill is, that the Tories have always proved themselves bad business men. They don't know how to conduct business—to buy and sell. Why, they bought £4,000,000 of shares in the Suez Canal—shares from which they have not got a penny dividend, they will have to wait 20 years for it, and meanwhile they are receiving interest on the amount that they have paid—and at the end of 20 years, supposing Egypt keeps upon its legs, and the Khedive is able to pay, and does not become bankrupt, they will be paid the money. Gentlemen, I told you the same years ago, when this came out, that the Government could have bought this £4,000,000 of shares for £1,500,000. I said it, and I repeated it, in the House of Commons, in the presence of two or three ministers of the Crown; and although it was denied by some of these men in Burnley, who know better than those ministers, the ministers themselves dared not deny it. Well, now, gentlemen: I say that the Government are bad business men, and they make blunders—and they did make a blunder of this waterworks affair; but I didn't know that that was the reason for their dissolving Parliament. I daresay they were glad to get rid of the Water Bill, but I will tell you what the Government say. They say that the reason they dissolved Parliament was, that they only brought Parliament together for temporary purposes—to get an indemnity for their Irish measures in relief of the distress. Well, gentlemen: the fact that they only got Parliament together to get an indemnity for their Irish measures is a proof of what I believe—that they never intended that Parliament should go on. If they had brought forward the Bill for Irish distress as they ought to have done—in sufficiently early time, when it was coming upon them—they might have had the whole question settled, and then have had an autumn session; and having got the measures passed by Parliament, they might have dissolved, if they thought proper, before this session began. We should have been very glad, and that would have been the usual constitutional course, instead of calling Parliament together, getting over four or five weeks, and then dissolving in the middle of the business, which is altogether an unusual, very inconvenient, and unjustifiable course. I say, with regard to the question of Irish distress, the Government were warned last session again and again, through Irish members, and they met those warnings with ridicule and insult from the mouth of Mr. Jas. Lowther, the Secretary for Ireland; and I can tell you that Irish members were put down in the House of Commons when they were trying to induce the Government and the House to listen to representations of Irish distress. What did the Government do? I will tell you this, gentlemen. I dare say many of you don't know what I am about to tell you. These Tories say a great deal about Ireland, but they don't tell you how unfairly it is treated. Ireland has no poor-law like England, and in Ireland the Board of Guardians cannot give a single penny of out-door relief out of the rates. In England, in a case of distress, the

Guardians can do so. In Ireland they are not allowed, and if the Government, in view of this great distress, had relaxed the poor-laws of Ireland, and given the Guardians the power to give a little out-door relief out of the rates, that, no doubt, would have been a great assistance to the poor in the country. Why don't they do it, gentlemen? Why don't they do it? They don't do it because the charge of the relief would have to come out of the rates, and the rates would have been laid upon the land, and would have come out of the landowners' pockets. What did they do, gentlemen? I'll tell you what they did. They agreed to lend the land owners three-quarters of a million of money to improve their own estates, at one per cent. per year. Gentlemen, I said to a number of the great landowners of Ireland with whom I am on friendly terms—in private—"This is a gross swindle;" and it *is* a swindle. Is it not monstrous that these landowners should have money at one per cent. to improve their own estates? Gentlemen, I'll tell you something more—and this was a question I raised in the House of Commons. I said, "Well, what guarantee have you that when the landlord has improved his estates by draining and other works, by the use of the money you are charging him one per cent. for—when he has improved his estate, what guarantee have you that he won't charge five per cent. interest in additional rent upon his tenants?" That was a plain question, and it was so plain that the Government were obliged to concede the point, and they admitted the amendment which we urged to restrain landowners from charging more in rent than would repay principal and interest at the rate it was being lent by the Government. That amendment went up to the House of Lords, and they struck it out, and left the Irish landowners the power to make a profit out of this one per cent., as they will do, in charging, at the rate of five per cent., additional rent upon the tenants who may occupy the estates. There is another point in regard to the Irish Poor Law. I want you just to understand the position of Ireland. In Ireland, no clergyman, or minister of any denomination, is allowed to be a member of the Board of Guardians, nor is any priest permitted to sit. In England, you know, you have clergymen, you have dissenting ministers, you have Catholic priests on the Boards of Guardians—no man is excluded; but in Ireland they exclude ministers of religion because the Tories don't want to have the priests on the Boards of Guardians, and they exclude them by law. This session, when a Bill was brought forward by an hon. friend of mine to make the law of Ireland in that respect the same as England, it was opposed by the Tories in the House of Commons. The Secretary for Ireland, Mr. James Lowther, was speaking at York the night before last. He is the man who has the management of those affairs in Ireland, and he sneered at the whole question of this assistance being given to the Irish poor, and at the demands which had been made upon the Irish Government; and he said, in his speech to his constituents, that there had been applications to provide every person in Ireland with a comfortable meal at every hour of the day—sneering and turning into ridicule the attempts which had been made for Irish relief. I have just glanced at the grounds the Government have put forward for this dissolution. I have also remarked upon the objection

to the way in which the dissolution has taken place. But, gentlemen, the dissolution is welcome. We are delighted to have it ; and so far as I am concerned I consider that the difficulties we have been under as a Liberal party during the last Parliament, and during the last few sessions, in the presence of the great Tory majority, have been very great indeed, and I am very glad that there is a chance now of there being, by a dissolution, a change in the state of affairs. Well, gentlemen : I came down to Burnley with great pleasure, as I always do, and I found myself under circumstances of a very peculiar character. I found myself opposed by a young gentleman, who, I understand, is an officer in the 11th Hussars. When I heard that Lord Edmund Talbot was coming out for Burnley, I naturally thought I should like to get some information about him, and amongst my Tory acquaintances in the House of Commons belonging to the same rank of society to which he belongs, I made some inquiries. I asked one son of a duke, one brother of a marquis, and two sons of earls what they knew about Lord Edmund Talbot. The answers in every case were that they never heard there was such a person in existence. That is no discredit to Lord Edmund Talbot, at all ; because I have no doubt he has very recently come from school or college, and has probably not met the gentlemen with whom I conversed. I must say I have not a word of disparagement personally to say about him. I have no doubt, although I could not learn anything about him, yet I expect to learn—what I am quite willing to take for granted—that he is a most estimable young man ; and I am bound to say, also, that I think it is to the credit of a young nobleman to try to interest himself and to get information about political questions. I, therefore, cannot say that in that respect I can complain of Lord Talbot coming to Burnley in an enquiring manner seeking political knowledge ; and I likewise observe that with the greatest possible appropriateness, the first meeting of my opponent was held in Pickup Croft *Infant School*. (A voice : “ St. Peter’s was’t first.”) At all events, he spoke in Pickup Croft schoolroom the first night. Now, gentlemen, I have said that I don’t object to a young nobleman seeking for political knowledge ; on the contrary, I think that is to be admired, only it must be considered what is the best mode of getting that knowledge—what is the right mode. In the first place, it appears to me that the right way to get political knowledge is not to come, a mere inexperienced young gentleman, to attempt to represent the great interests of an enormous manufacturing and working population such as Burnley. That does not seem to me to be the right way. I will tell you another thing—that I think it is desirable that the younger sons of our peers should carefully train themselves to political knowledge. I know many younger sons of peers who have trained themselves to political knowledge, and the result has been that they have thrown off the Toryism of their ancestors. Toryism may suit some of the eldest sons, but it does not suit the younger brother ; and after carefully studying political questions for the next few years it is barely possible that Lord E. Talbot might become a Liberal, and then, when he becomes a Liberal, in the course of a few years, with a good political knowledge, I should be delighted to see him in the House of Commons. Well ; but now, gentlemen, I

have another thing to say to you on this matter. There is a good school of political learning and a bad school of political learning; and this young gentleman has gone into the bad school, because the first lesson he is being taught is the lesson of political hypocrisy. He is being made use of by the Tories for a purpose which is a politically immoral purpose, because he is made use of, not because they like Catholics—for their whole career as a party has been opposed to Catholics—it is not that they like Catholics, but they use him because he is a Catholic, as a tool in order to catch the Catholic vote. Well now, gentlemen: we have been told by the Tory newspapers in this town that the announcement of the candidature of this young gentleman had carried consternation into the Liberal ranks. Well, I must say I have seen no evidence of that consternation since I arrived in Burnley. I must take this opportunity of saying how grateful I am to my constituents of Burnley for that magnificent demonstration which you gave me on my arrival. Gentlemen, it was a magnificent sight, and when I remember that it was a spontaneous exhibition of feeling—that there was no placard, but simply an intimation spread from mouth to mouth that I was going to arrive by a particular train—I say I feel indebted to you, gentlemen of Burnley; I feel indebted to my constituents for this great mark of their confidence. It gives me encouragement, because I felt, when I saw that magnificent assembly gathered together under such circumstances, I say I felt strengthened in the conviction that if I gave my services fully and honestly for the welfare of the great body of my constituents, when I came to them I should not fail in obtaining their support. It seems as though the enthusiasm has to continue. I am now addressing the most magnificent meeting which has, I suppose, ever been held in this borough; and at this moment, in the Mechanics' Institution, the overflow meeting is absolutely crowded, and waiting for me to go and address them; and in addition to that there is a second overflow meeting in Avenon schoolroom. Now, gentlemen, I recognise in these manifestations of your confidence something more than I have already mentioned. I recognise in them an evidence of the revival of the Liberal party in Lancashire. I see that throughout Lancashire we are having at the present moment a very great exhibition of enthusiasm in favour of Liberal principles. We are fighting the county and boroughs all along the entire line. I believe I am now justified in saying that all the four divisions of the county will be contested. There will be in South-West Lancashire a contest which I have every reason to believe will be carried to a successful conclusion, although it is in opposition to one of the Cabinet Ministers of the Crown. There is in South-East Lancashire a division of the county which I myself contested in 1874—there is now a most enthusiastic effort being made in favour of two Liberal candidates. In North-East Lancashire we have the advantage—we who are in Burnley, who are electors for North-East Lancashire—the great distinction and advantage of having as our candidate the leader of the Liberal party, the Marquis of Hartington; and I am quite sure every one of you, from the address he has put forth, and the admirable speech which he has delivered, must feel we are having a great advantage in having as our candidate a nobleman of such

distinguished ability. All this is in great contrast with 1874. At that time every division in the county of Lancaster went against us. Some of them were not contested. Many of the boroughs of Lancashire went against us also, and the result was that the Liberal party were defeated in both county and borough. Gentlemen, it is altogether different now, and I will tell you why. The people have found out the Government now. They have found out that in 1874 they did not know what was in store for them when they voted for Lord Beaconsfield's party. They have had experience since that time of what is meant by Tory government. And there is another point. Up to this time, gentlemen, the responsibilities for all that wicked policy, as I must call it, of our Government has rested with the Government themselves, and with their subservient majority in the House of Commons. You, as the people, at all events, have not been responsible for this policy, because you had not the opportunity at the polling booth of expressing your opinion upon it. But if now, at this general election, a majority of the people of this country return Tories to Parliament, then the responsibility of this wicked policy will not be the responsibility of Lord Beaconsfield or the responsibility of the late House of Commons, but it will be the individual responsibility of the electors of the United Kingdom. Now, gentlemen, I want to appeal to each of you; and if my voice can reach every elector in this borough, I say this is a matter for individual consciences. You have to consider in your own consciences, "How is it right for me to act with my vote on this occasion?" Let me tell you that I am old-fashioned enough to believe that if you go to the New Testament, you will find Christian principles that might be brought to bear upon national policy no less than on individual life; and my charge against this Government is, that their policy has been in opposition to this Christian morality that you will find recorded in the New Testament of our faith. I say that when you have to deal with great principles of policy, they are so far higher than these political questions that I should like to appeal to every man who hears me, and to any Conservative that may be present, and ask him whether he can justify, in his own conscience, the support of such a policy of aggression and injustice as that which Lord Beaconsfield followed out? And let me remind my Conservative friends in Burnley that Lord Beaconsfield's policy is something very different from ordinary Conservative policy. If you want a parallel for it you must go back 100 years, to the days of Lord North, or to the beginning of this century, to the days of Lord Liverpool; then you will find how the Tories used the power of the Crown and Cabinet to send the army all over the world. Lord North—and I have often thought Lord Beaconsfield exemplifies him in his policy—spent £200,000,000 in order to put down the rising independence of the United States of America. Fortunately for us, the Colonies succeeded in getting their independence, and now they are that magnificent and great country that we see on the other side of the Atlantic. Look at the continental wars at the beginning of this century, when the Tory party spent £1,000,000,000 in wars in Europe. They built up the National Debt, and we are now paying a very considerable sum in order to pay the interest of a debt that was incurred by a Tory Govern-

ment something like 60 years ago. There is not a man amongst you who works that, out of his earnings, either directly or indirectly, does not pay a certain amount of money to go to the payment of the expenditure made 60 years ago. Gentlemen, I say that a Conservative like Sir Robert Peel would never have been guilty of such a policy as that of Lord Beaconsfield; and let me remind you of another circumstance—let me remind you that in the last few days we have gained the adhesion to the Liberal party of one of the most eminent Conservatives, who has recently taken a high position in her Majesty's Councils—the Earl of Derby has joined the Liberal party. Although, as you know, he was a member of Lord Beaconsfield's Government, although you know he is a man of Conservative instincts, and has hitherto acted with the Conservative party, he shows that the Conservatism of Lord Beaconsfield, or rather that the policy of Lord Beaconsfield, was not true Conservatism. I point to Lord Derby, and I speak to the Conservatives and tell them that the reason he has left the Tory party is because he has had experience of the danger of Lord Beaconsfield's policy, and because he is alarmed lest, at the general election, he should have the chance of another lease of power in order to carry the country into other difficulties. Lord Derby left the Government under very peculiar circumstances. He said he would not remain in the Government, because Lord Beaconsfield proposed to move the Indian troops from India to Europe, with the view of seizing upon some point, either an island, or some portion of the Turkish dominions. That was without the consent of the Sultan; it was a filibustering expedition—an expedition of a political bandit; and Lord Derby said he would not have anything to do with it, and he came from the Government in consequence of it; and when he made this statement in the House of Lords, Lord Salisbury called him a Titus Oates, because he said he was giving a statement of a plot that did not exist. We now know that it did exist, and that there was the intention of bringing the Indian troops into Europe. Those Indian troops were brought into Europe—my friend in the chair has alluded to them—at a cost of nearly a million of money. What did you get out of it, I should like to know? We brought those 7,000 Hindoos through the Suez Canal and took them to Malta, and then we did not know what to do with them. There was no proper provision to receive them there, so they got possession of Cyprus and took them there. But that was worse, for they began to die from fever; and as they had no proper accommodation they took them off again. We had to spend nearly a million of money, and I quite agree with the Chairman that it was about the most ridiculous proceeding that a Government could take. In the face of Europe, where there are millions of men in arms—where each of the great monarchies raises its armies by conscription—it is perfectly childish to say that the bringing of 7,000 Hindoos can, in any way, frighten Russia or anybody else. That is about the most absurd thing anybody could do. The Government, at all events, thought better of their wild scheme of seizing hold of Cyprus or part of the coast of Asia Minor—that is, without the consent of the Sultan—and so they agreed to buy it. It was a curious bargain, I can tell you. We bought it under a secret

agreement called the Anglo-Turkish Convention. I wish to refer to this document, because it is a very good instance of the way in which Lord Beaconsfield manages the business of this country. In the first place, it was done by the Royal prerogative. The Queen entered into this Anglo-Turkish Convention under the advice of her ministers; then it was done without the knowledge of Parliament. Nay, so far from Parliament having a knowledge of it, the Government were very careful to keep it from the knowledge of Parliament by something very much like deception; and then it was a violation of the European Treaty. You will observe that the Government talked a very great deal about the observance of treaties; but they have broken treaties quite as much as any other Government in Europe, and more than most Governments. This Anglo-Turkish Convention pawned the resources of the British Empire in an undertaking that the whole force of Britain should be used in order to maintain the infamous Turkish despotism in Asia Minor. Your labour, and your children's labour, for generations, may be pawned—put in pledge—for what? Something in which you are concerned? Nothing of the sort,—simply in order that the Turkish rule may be kept upon millions of subject populations which are being crushed and ground down in Asia Minor by the exactions and by the wicked proceedings of the ruling Turkish pashas. And what have we got in return for these great obligations that we have entered into? We have a promise from Turkey that she will reform herself. And we know perfectly well that the promise is not worth the paper it is written on. Why, gentlemen, a short time ago you must have seen in the papers that when Ahmed Tewfik, who had been employed in looking over the translation of the Christian Scriptures, was actually sentenced to death, our ambassador appealed to the Turkish Sultan that he would act according to his promised reform, and demanded that there should be religious toleration, but he had the greatest difficulty in getting any attention paid to his complaint; and then Hafiz Pasha, who was one of the worst men guilty of the atrocities in Bulgaria, who apprehended that poor schoolmaster, was promoted and decorated, while the schoolmaster was allowed to be sent away to some island, and what has since become of the poor man no one knows, though probably he has been put out of the way before now. It is altogether absurd to imagine that the Turkish Government will make any reforms. But then it is said, "Well, but if the Turks don't reform, we get out of the Anglo-Turkish Convention, because, if the Turks don't keep their part of the agreement, we shall get out of it, and that will be a very good thing." I firmly believe that if the Liberal party came into power under the conditions of the Anglo-Turkish Convention, in consequence of the conduct of Turkey England would be honourably withdrawn from that agreement. But what will be the case if you give another lease of power to Lord Beaconsfield? Do you think he will agree to give up the Anglo-Turkish Convention? I will tell you—*he won't*. He has sent some military consuls into Asia Minor. These people are generally supposed to know something about trade, but he has sent military men. I have no doubt he has in view some earlier or later occupation there. Gentlemen, this is the manner in which we are placed at the present moment. The

Armenian Christians are so cruelly treated that any day we may have an uprising amongst them against the rule of Turkey. They are Christians, and have a perfect right to their rights, their liberties, and their property, and the honour of their wives and children ought to be sacred; but they are being cruelly crushed down by the Turks, and may rise again. If you return Lord Beaconsfield to power you will have him assisting the Turk to put down these Armenian Christians, and you will have another uprising of the same kind that you had in European Turkey; and therefore I say it is a most serious matter indeed—the question as to whether or not Lord Beaconsfield shall be returned to power, because at any moment we may find ourselves placed in circumstances of very serious difficulty and responsibility. Well, now, gentlemen: there has been a very unfounded charge made against the Liberal party, and it has been said that if the Liberal party come into office they will do away with all the engagements into which this nation has previously entered, for they will refuse to be bound by treaties which have been entered into by the previous Government. That is altogether an unfounded charge. What the Liberal party would do, no doubt, would be to observe, as far as honour required them to do, all undertakings that might have been entered into by the previous Government, but where there was no absolute undertaking—where, in fact, matters remain now unsettled, the Liberal Government would be able to deal with these questions in a decided manner. Take Afghanistan, for instance: there is nothing settled there. You don't know what may happen from one day to another. The peace of Gandamak, where is it now? Where is Yakoob Khan, with whom we negotiated it? There is no treaty whatever; no engagement whatever. We find ourselves with the British Army in the country of the Afghans, keeping it down, and exposed at any moment to serious difficulties, and certainly incurring enormous expenditure. A Liberal Government, I have no doubt, can deal with that question in a way which would be satisfactory to the people at large. There are other questions which might equally be dealt with by a Liberal Government, but I believe that if the Tories remain in power all these questions that are now open will go from bad to worse. We have a right to judge of them in the future by their actions in the past, and we say they have made such a number of criminal mistakes, and entered into such unjust undertakings, that it is impossible we can have the slightest confidence in the future. But, gentlemen, you know Lord Beaconsfield is seeking the confidence of England and the English people by a manifesto, and he has issued the most remarkable manifesto that I suppose ever proceeded from any other great statesman in this country. This is his celebrated letter to the Duke of Marlborough. In that letter there is some very curious English—some very unintelligible expressions; and I must say there are some attempts at intentional deception. I must say, in regard to that manifesto, that Lord Beaconsfield is seeking to sow animosity between the English and Irish people. Now, gentlemen, let me beg of you as Englishmen—those of you who are Englishmen and Scotchmen—not for a moment to allow yourselves to be led away into this path of national animosity into which the Prime Minister is seeking to lead you. He is evidently intending,

from the language he is using, to excite, on the part of the English people, feelings of hatred and animosity towards their Irish brethren. I ask you not to be misled, but always to bear in mind that, although it may be true there may have been strong expressions used, that the Irish people are suffering burdens which you in England would not stand for six months. Let me remind you that in Ireland, at the present moment, there is a very large amount of distress from year to year. There has been great distress and dreadful destitution in that country, and the Irish people are not allowed to have political privileges the same as in England; and, of course, they resent that injustice in regard to the land. By the land system all Ireland is starved. The people are starved, the produce of land is kept down, and the whole circumstances of Ireland are those of destitution and difficulty, simply because the land of Ireland is held by a very small number of landowners, many of whom are absentee owners of land. I can tell you that two-thirds of the whole of the 20,000,000 acres are held at the present time by 2,000 persons—about one-half the number present at this meeting; and there are thousands upon thousands of tenant farmers upon that soil—many of them having no fixity or certainty of tenure, but if they attempt to improve the cultivation and increase its value, they are liable to have their rents raised upon them. How is it possible for a country to prosper with land laws such as those? Bear in mind all these great landowners live away, not as our landowners, spending their own personal expenditure in their locality—they go to London, and all these rents are taken from Ireland; and instead of finding employment for industry, they leave the people to make the best shift they can. That is not the fulfilment of the duties of owners of the soil. I say the ownership of the soil is a public trust; and we, the people of England, have a right to say that if the land of any part of the three kingdoms is so held as not to produce the largest amount of food, and find the largest amount of employment for the people, that land is improperly held, and the law should be appealed to in order to put the matter right. Now, gentlemen, let me tell you I have the highest authority for saying that, under proper cultivation, the land of Ireland, in many parts, would produce four times more food than it does at present. At present 20,000,000 acres support only $5\frac{1}{2}$ millions of the population. I say if it produced anything like the food it might be made to produce, it would support in comfort at least 12,000,000. But what is the effect of driving the population from the soil? It is that the labour market in England is overstocked. They don't find proper employment in Ireland; but if they could find proper employment for Irishmen, how much happier they would be in their own country! I hope, also, many of you have read a very admirable speech Mr. John Bright made in Birmingham, when he alluded to this subject, and said he hoped some measure might be adopted by which a large number of estates might be sold to the tenant farmers, and thus there might be a large number of peasant proprietors. I go entirely with Mr. Bright. I see that all over Europe there are a number of peasant proprietors, who are happy and prosperous; and in the Channel Islands the same happy state of things prevails. I want to see the same principle tried to a large extent in

Ireland. I believe it could be done by local measures ; and I believe that instead of two-thirds of the land being owned by 2,000 individuals, we should have in the country a large number of proprietors, and we should see an amount of happiness and prosperity, and do away with all that life-long excitement and dissatisfaction we constantly witness. I must hurry on to two or three points in Lord Beaconsfield's address. He charges upon the Liberal party that we neglected the colonies of this country, and that some of us are in favour of decomposition. Why, gentlemen, the Liberal party have been the great promoters of colonial interests, because we have been the great supporters of Colonial freedom. If you don't give to the Colonies freedom you will have dissatisfaction and disturbance, and an anxiety to withdraw from British connection ; but the Liberal party have always gone on the principle that we should give to the Colonies the right, as far as possible, of local self-government ; that we should encourage our colonies, as far as we can, in their efforts to secure prosperity. But I am bound to say that I, for one, entirely object to large sums of money being paid out of the British taxpayers' pockets for colonial purposes, in which the British taxpayer has no interest at all. In connection with this policy of the decomposition of the colonies, Lord Beaconsfield says : " We ought "—to give it in the same curious words—" to consolidate some co-operation ! " I don't know what he means, and nobody else does but himself. Then Lord Beaconsfield says, about the peace of Europe, that it is necessary that he should remain in power in order to preserve the peace of Europe ; and, as my friend in the chair said, maintain the ascendancy of the British arms in the councils of Europe. I say that the great danger to this country is the intermeddling disposition of Lord Beaconsfield to intervene in foreign affairs with which we have no concern. I believe that Lord Beaconsfield has in his brain at present some undefined plans of foreign alliance which would have the most dangerous and disastrous effect upon this country. I believe there is an idea that England and Germany and Austria should unite—and, for anything I know, may have partially united—in order to oppose Russia and France. Let me tell you that if by intervention we in this country are involved, directly or indirectly, in a European war, there is not a single man, woman, or child in this kingdom that will not pay the penalty in serious sufferings and disaster. Let it be borne in mind that with us peace is the very breath of commerce. Let it be remembered that we cannot exist unless we have the world for our customers ; and bear in mind that no war can take place between any two nations of the earth, even if we are not engaged in it, without interfering with the means of those nations who buy our commodities. Let me remind you that in the Franco-German War, with which we were not connected, the cost was so large that it interfered very much in the long run with British trade ; and I can tell you from my personal experience that the war between Russia and Turkey interfered very seriously with the main branches of manufacture. Lord Beaconsfield talks about being in favour of peace. I say this is not a Government of peace. You hear of peace-at-any-price men. I am not one of those, but I would rather be a peace-at-any-price man than a war-at-any-price man. Lord Beaconsfield has not preserved the

peace of Europe ; I believe his policy led to the war—at all events it did not prevent the war—between Russia and Turkey ; and I say, further than that, that we have been at war in Africa and Afghanistan for two or three years past. The result is that you have had more to pay in taxation, and, further, that your trade has fallen off ; and when trade falls off you have less wages, so that you have more taxes and less wages. I have no time to go into many matters that I intended to allude to. I must postpone, until other opportunities, questions which I intended to speak upon ; for I shall have to go directly to the other meetings, and therefore I cannot remain here. Let me say that in this contest in which we are engaged we must not only work, but we must be united. Now you know, all of you, that I am not what is called a Whig. I take very decided views upon political matters, and I am always ready to listen to arguments which may be advanced upon any subject that may be brought up for public discussion ; but what I want to say to my friends is this :—We cannot all of us exactly think alike, and there are always little questions that turn up upon which there may be little differences of opinion, and some questions may be matters of great interest ; but still, in the present election we must not bring them forward. We must try to get our minds to this great issue, “Will you, or will you not, support, for another seven years, the most wicked, the most dangerous Government that this country has had for many years past?”—(“No.”)—There are many side issues. There is the disestablishment of the Church : many people feel anxious about it, but it is not pressing. There will be nothing done, except in regard to religious liberty in the burial grounds to Dissenters. It will not come on in the next Parliament, and therefore we should not bring it prominently forward now. I may mention about religious education. I remember it was said I was an opponent to religious education, but you know that is altogether untrue. And there is another question, about interfering with denominational schools. So far as I am concerned, I will not interfere with the interests of any denominational schools ; and therefore that question might be put aside. Then I have got a letter asking my opinion upon another matter, in which a certain number of gentlemen take an interest, and I will just mention it to let them see that I have read it. It has reference to the railway servants, and the writers ask me whether I will support the Workmen’s Compensation Bill to railway servants. Gentlemen, I think that is a matter of the greatest possible interest, which has been receiving the attention of Parliament. I think railway servants are placed in a very peculiar position by the law as it exists ; and I am quite of opinion that that law requires amendment ; and if I go back to Parliament, that, and other questions, when they come up in a practical shape before Parliament, I will give my best and careful attention, with the object of doing what is just and right to all classes of the community. Well, now, gentlemen, I shall be obliged to go to the other meetings. I am deeply indebted to you for this evidence of your appreciation. I never addressed in Burnley a more magnificent meeting than this. I have been very much obliged to you for your constant kindness and attention, and I place myself in your hands. I am fighting a battle

not simply on my own account ; I am fighting for great principles, in which you are interested as well as myself. During the time I have been your member, I have taken a course in Parliament—I may say, perhaps without boasting, I have taken a prominent course, and I have never shrunk in Parliament from saying anything in the presence of the House of Commons that I was in the habit of saying to my constituents here ; and I say, when I look back—as you may look back—to the time when, a comparative stranger, I came amongst you to solicit your votes, at your kind and formal request—if you will look back on what I said, I challenge any party, any individual, to say if I have not fulfilled in every particular, and supported those things that I promised when I first became a candidate for the representation of your borough. Gentlemen, you took me then a comparative stranger ; but you have had the experience of four years of my efforts to serve you as your representative ; and I can only appeal to you, with confidence, that you may give me your support in the way you gave it on a former occasion ; but I say further, gentlemen, I say I appeal to you to return me by such a majority this time as will prevent me having the unnecessary annoyance of a contest.

No. VII.

Speech to the Liberal Electors at Burnley, March 25, 1880.

Mr. Chairman and gentlemen,—I must first of all congratulate the people of Burnley upon the remarkable good temper and good humour with which this election has been conducted so far. When I see that in other constituencies in this county and in other parts of the kingdom there have been disturbances of the public peace ; when I find that there have been gross instances of violence, I may say that I feel proud of Burnley. I am proud of Burnley because you will recollect that a short time ago there was a libel passed upon the conduct of Burnley, and I had the honour of holding up my voice against that libel, which was pronounced by an official gentleman in this county ; and I trust we shall so conduct the present election contest that when it is over we shall have acted like intelligent and moral upright men, determined to maintain our own opinions, but, at the same time, not willing, in any way, to interfere unfairly with the expression of the opinions of others. Now, gentlemen, I may also say that the language which has been used by our opponents at their meetings has not been of a character of which we have any reason to complain. I think they have a perfect right to urge all the considerations in their power in favour of their candidates ; but I am bound to say that, in looking at their speeches, with a view to find arguments, that I might meet them with an answer when I come to address a meeting of this kind, I have discovered that in their speeches there is, in reality, very little argument at all. But I am bound to say that I have no complaint to make of their speeches. I observe that at the great meeting which they held in this building on Tuesday night—it was not a meeting like this, a meeting attended, as

this is, by such a very large proportion of male adults—but, if I am informed correctly, it was not only a meeting embracing a considerable number of people from the country, but, I believe, a very large number of young ladies showed their admiration for the young candidate by gracing the occasion with their presence. However, I don't object to—I am sure I have no reason to complain of—any of the speeches which were made on that occasion. I observe that Mr. Chamberlain Starkie was kind enough to refer to me in friendly terms, and I wish to say from this platform that that good feeling which Mr. Starkie was kind enough to express towards me is entirely reciprocal. I have a warm regard and esteem for Mr. Chamberlain Starkie. We have been in the House of Commons together for a number of years, and I have frequently had friendly association with him, and I am sure I look upon him as, in every way, an honourable man. But, gentlemen, we are not opposing Mr. Starkie or any other Conservative candidate on personal grounds. This is a period in which we must sink, all of us, any personal considerations. There might be periods when it might be proper, perhaps, when there was no great political question involved, in which it might be justifiable for a voter, possibly, to yield, to some extent, to personal and friendly feelings, and to desire to support those with whom he was connected; but, gentlemen, the present occasion is one which does not admit of any such consideration as that. The questions which are now before us are of such serious interest to the people of this country that it is impossible for us to refuse to exercise our voice and our votes in a decided manner in favour of the opinions we hold. Gentlemen, the Parliament which has lasted for six years has now expired. Perhaps I might say with truth that it was the worst Parliament that has existed for many years past. But it is not necessary that we should dwell upon the conduct of the last Parliament. What we have to do is this: we have to judge—to call before us in judgment—the Government which has embodied the majority of that Parliament. We have an opportunity of deciding, as electors of this kingdom, whether or no we are satisfied with the conduct of Lord Beaconsfield's Government; and we, as the Liberal party, we now arraign before the grand jury of the nation the Government of Lord Beaconsfield, as having been guilty of high crimes and misdemeanours against the interests of the great body of the people; and we appeal to you, as the grand jury of the people, to support a verdict of condemnation against the Government. Well, now, gentlemen, Lord Beaconsfield, a year or two ago, made a remark at the Mansion House dinner, and he said, "The Government of the world is carried on by monarchs and statesmen; not by anonymous paragraphists, or the hair-brained chatter of irresponsible frivolity;" and the Chancellor of the Exchequer, speaking about the same time, said the English people knew nothing about foreign politics; and, therefore, their opinion was not worth taking. And, relying upon these doctrines—these doctrines of Lord Beaconsfield that the government of the world is to be carried on by statesmen and sovereigns; and this opinion of Sir Stafford Northcote, that the people of England are ignorant of foreign politics—he has strengthened the prerogative of the Crown to the very utmost in the affairs of this kingdom, has exerted the treaty-making power

of the Crown, and has exercised the power of the Crown to declare war to an extent which puts aside the rights and powers of the people of this country. And we are so particular in the management of our affairs that we won't allow the Government to pass a Turnpike Bill, or allow a farthing of taxation, without the sanction of Parliament; and yet Lord Beaconsfield claims that the Crown shall have the right, without, in any way, consulting Parliament, to declare a war that may cost you millions and hundreds of millions of money, and thousands of lives, and enter into treaties of obligations that may fasten upon the necks of the people of this country a burden that will be felt for generations to come. I protest against this doctrine, and I say the people ought to claim that their representatives should be consulted in regard to these great operations of State; and my great complaint against the late Parliament is that it has allowed the ministers of the Crown to stretch the prerogative of the Crown to an extent which has been injurious to the rights and interests of the people. Well, but, gentlemen, if the Government of statesmen and sovereigns are to determine whether we shall have war or peace, one thing is quite certain, that we shall have to pay the cost. They won't pay the cost; you, the people of this country, have to pay the costs; and, therefore, I say that as the cost of these burdens comes out of your pockets, you have a perfect right through your representatives, to express your opinions. And now you have an opportunity, by the votes of the majority of the electors, of saying whether or not you are satisfied with such a state of things that the Government of this country shall have the right of involving us in war, or have the right to enter into any great treaty or obligation without, in the first instance, having the consent of the people. I have no doubt, in my own mind, what the verdict of the country will be at this election. We must remember—and this is the reason why we should all make the greatest effort, both in the borough and the county—that this appeal to the country, as it is now being made, is not an appeal to the bulk and fair opinion of the electors and people of this country. Just let me remind you of one or two little things. In the first place go to Padiham. Padiham is part of North-east Lancashire. You find a large and pushing population very much like your own. A great number of people occupy houses similar to those in Burnley; but while you in Burnley have votes, these people of Padiham, having the same obligations to support the Crown and the Government, have no vote at all. Don't you think it is a monstrous thing—a mockery—that when the Queen appeals to the people of this country to elect a Parliament, the franchise is denied to these? Gentlemen, that is one of the questions the Liberal party will take up, and they will, as a party, insist that the people of this country shall have the right to vote when they are in a position such as this which you occupy, and which right the people in Padiham do not now possess. I will remind you of another thing. We want an entire change in the distribution of political power. They make an appeal to the country, and if a number of little boroughs return quite as many members as the large boroughs, you will see that it is not at all fair and does not give a fair representation of the opinion of the country. Let me give you one or two facts. There are 76 boroughs in

England, Ireland, and Scotland, with an entire number of electors of 68,644, and these 76 boroughs send 76 members to Parliament. Now, there are 32 other boroughs with a total number of electors of 977,555—that is to say, they have 14 times the number of electors of the 76 boroughs, and yet, while the 76 boroughs send 76 members, the 32 boroughs only return 68. I don't know whether you ever saw a pugilistic encounter with one arm tied behind the back. That is the position of the Liberal party, because it is these small boroughs, these little constituencies, that don't represent Liberal opinion like the great centres of population do. In the same way a number of counties return Tories; but if the working classes had the franchise as they ought to have it, they would, no doubt, return more Liberals. But although we are fighting this great political battle with one arm tied behind us, I have a distinct confidence that we shall win, and I will tell you why. I say that a great change has taken place in this country in its opinions since 1874—the time of the last general election. During the few years of Mr. Gladstone's administration we saw great prosperity; men made a great amount of money, workmen had such good wages, and the price of food was so generally moderate, that everybody felt perfectly satisfied, and many people were getting wealth. The amount of wealth which was made in various directions by the people in this country, in the few years ending 1874, was, I suppose, unexampled in the history of this kingdom. Now, gentlemen, when the people of England became prosperous, a new generation had arisen, and they had forgotten what their forefathers knew perfectly well. And I observe that in the speeches that were made from this platform on Tuesday night, my honourable friend, Mr. Chamberlain Starkie, complained that Mr. Bright had referred to too large an extent to the measures which had been passed in former years, and had claimed all the credit of them to the Liberal party. Gentlemen, that is a true claim. It is the Liberal party who have carried the great measures which have tended to promote the happiness and prosperity of the country. Why, I perfectly well remember, when I was a younger man even than my noble opponent, I recollect I was only 20 years of age, standing upon a public platform along with Mr. Cobden and Bright, and I was then engaged in advocating the principles of free trade and the repeal of the corn laws; and I recollect—[Mr. Rylands here pointed to the loaves on each side of the platform, and caused much amusement]—that we carried in procession through the towns a small loaf representing the monopolist, and a large loaf representing free trade. Ay, and at that time I can tell this to you who are not old enough to remember what I am recalling—that many of the great manufacturing towns were in a state of absolute starvation; Stockport, Oldham, Bolton, and other towns in Lancashire, if you went through them, you would have found the streets crowded with idle men, and the public works and mills closed for want of employment, and at that time when the people were absolutely driven to the greatest distress, owing to the want of trade, owing to the want of foreign trade, the monopolists—the Tories who had interest in it—kept up the price of food, shut out those blessings which the providence of God intended for this country, and refused to let them

come into a starving population. I can remember the time when people who were willing to work at honest industries in order to maintain their families in comfort, were walking up and down pale and wan ; I can remember visiting their houses and finding their wives and children in a state of almost absolute starvation, and we spoke and we said a great deal in those days. I remember amongst other things we quoted Scripture, and we said "that he that withholdeth corn from the people is cursed," and yet we had to contend year after year against those accursed laws ; and when the people were starving there was a noble duke stood up in either the House of Lords or elsewhere, and said that he thought there was a great deal too much said about the starvation of the people, and if they chose they could get a little currie powder which would make good soup to maintain them. That was the grandfather of my noble opponent. We must not visit the sins of the father on the children, and I don't want to say that with any view in any way of casting reflections upon the young gentleman who is standing for Burnley, but I mention it to show you that the Tory party, to which he is attached, in those days resisted the demands which were made by the Liberal party to obtain free trade for the country. And yet, gentlemen, as the result of these measures we have had an increasing trade ever since until these last few years. We have brought from all parts of the world food in large quantities, and we have paid for that food by the labour of your looms and iron works, and the various branches of industry, and all that great prosperity that came like a golden shower upon the people of this country was due entirely to the efforts of the Liberal party. No doubt the Tories will tell us that Sir Robert Peel repealed the Corn Laws, and he was a Conservative Minister, they say. The fact is, Sir Robert Peel was an enlightened Conservative Minister ; and when he was convinced by argument that free trade was right, he conceded free trade and acted a manly part. But what happened ? He was hounded almost to death by bitter misrepresentation by the Tory squires and monopolists in the House of Commons, and in that vituperation and condemnation, because Sir Robert Peel did a great and good thing for the great body of the people, none was more bitter than that which came from the mouth of Benjamin Disraeli, the present leader of the Tory party. And you are now asked to send a supporter, a gentleman to support the Prime Minister who, if he is marked by anything, has always been marked by the circumstance that he was bitterly antagonistic to any measure for the benefit of the people at large. When the people were so prosperous in 1874, and had forgotten what Toryism meant, and what the Liberals had done for them, Mr. Disraeli appeared on the scene in his usual character, and at the end of 1873 he addressed the students of the University of Glasgow. Now, gentlemen, Mr. Disraeli, now Lord Beaconsfield, is a great believer in frightening people. He is a great believer in creating bugbears ; and when the people of this country were enjoying wealth to the extent which I have mentioned, it occurred to Mr. Disraeli that he would raise a bugbear to frighten them, and so at the end of 1873 he said there was a disturbing spirit which was then rising like the moaning wind in Europe, and which, he said, might become a great storm. And he

tried to frighten people of property that this spirit was rising, this disturbing spirit of communism was rising and might become a raging storm ; and thus, having completed this dreadful operation of raising the disturbing spirit, of course he let it be distinctly understood that if the moneyed classes who were timid lest they should be in some way injured, if they would trust their affairs to him he would allay that disturbing spirit that was moaning. Gentlemen, I don't know whether any of you went to an exhibition which was made at various towns in this kingdom by Professor Pepper, and which was called "Pepper's Ghost ;" but if you did you would see that Professor Pepper at will could produce the ghost of any character, and calculated to create alarm in the minds of those who did not understand the arrangement by which this apparition was produced. Gentlemen, the Earl of Beaconsfield is a political Pepper, and now he is playing his old game. He is trying to alarm us again by raising disturbing spirits. What does he say in this manifesto of his ? He speaks of Ireland, and he says there is a danger in Ireland scarcely less disastrous than pestilence and famine. Then he speaks of our colonies, and he says that the Liberal party are seeking to enfeeble them by a policy of "decomposition," and then he speaks of foreign affairs, and says that the power of England and peace of Europe will largely attend the verdict of the country. Well, gentlemen, of course the old hobgoblin of Russia is in the background, but he does not mention it in so many words. It is, however, behind the scenes, and you will observe that several ministers of the Crown in going through the country every now and then pull the strings up and there is the old hobgoblin. Well now, gentlemen, this bugbear and hobgoblin trick might have succeeded, as it did succeed in 1874, and might have succeeded now, but for something. I will tell you what it is. Every large class of society is dissatisfied with the Tory party, because they know what a Tory Government has done for them, and they are not going to be humbugged by any hobgoblin in the future, when they can look and see what has happened under Lord Beaconsfield's administration. The farmers believed the promises the Tories made to them on the last occasion, and would not listen to the Liberals. They said the Tories were the proper friends to them. But look at the farmers now ? What comfort have they now when they find that the first two or three bad harvests has left them in a serious condition ? They begin to say, "We do not think those Tory friends were worth very much," and they are beginning to think it would be a very good thing if there was a change. Look at the merchants, whose trade with foreign countries has been very much decreased ; look at the manufacturers, who during the last three or four years have produced much less cotton yarn and cloth ; look at the ironworks that have not kept their forges and furnaces in employment. Wherever you look in all these classes you see the same thing ; look at the colliers, for instance, and you will find that during the last three years they have suffered greatly, and you find a state of things under this Government which has been a very serious injury to them. Coal-owners, instead of making profits, have made none at all, and many have made a loss ; and the result as been that the tradesmen, who depend upon the good employ-

ment of the other classes, have suffered greatly. I know perfectly well that has been the case without exception. The licensed victuallers too, who went against the Liberal party in 1874, have also been affected, and I think they are beginning to find out that bad trade affects them as well as any other class of society. Of course, as the result, operatives' wages have gone down. I am quite aware that one of the Conservative speakers stated that I had said in my address that the Tory Government were the only cause of bad trade ; I said nothing of the kind. I am quite aware, as you are, that we must always have fluctuations, but what I complained of was that the Conservative Government, by their restless policy, by their bragging, and by their warlike policy, have done a great deal to increase the depression, and they have delayed the revival of trade. Now, gentlemen, there is a little revival of trade. As I was riding over from Manchester to-day, when I looked at the hedgerows and fields, I saw here and there the first buddings and blossoming of Spring, I could not help thinking that just so, it seemed as if the trade of the country was beginning to bud a little, and I also thought that if by the general election there was a majority returned to Parliament that would bring into power a Government presided over by Mr. Gladstone, Bright, and Hartington, then I thought it will act upon the budding improvement of trade much as the warm sun acts upon the fruitfulness of the country, and that budding will blossom and become fruitful and prosperous ; but I thought, and I say to you, that if, as the result of this great appeal to the country, you again return a majority of Conservatives to bring Lord Beaconsfield's government in for a new lease of power, the very fact of Lord Beaconsfield's government going into power again will act like an early frost, and nip in the bud these evidences of reviving trade. I am quite satisfied that no man can read Lord Beaconsfield's manifesto without being convinced that there is something underneath it which it does not bear on the surface. Now Lord Beaconsfield indicates that he has been embarrassed during the last few weeks by the fact that foreign powers are uncertain whether the people of this country will maintain this government in place or not ; and he, therefore, appeals to the country to place him in power again, in order that he may secure for England in the councils of Europe what he calls an ascendancy, to carry out some plan which he has in his mind, and no doubt if he got a Parliament again with a subservient majority like the last, I think it is not difficult to point out what he means, it was the main work of Prince Bismarck. And, if Lord Beaconsfield matches himself with Prince Bismarck, he will find a man much more than his match, and I repeat that proverb which I gave last night, that "He that sups with the devil must have a long spoon." Gentlemen, I say that Lord Beaconsfield's policy up to the Treaty of Berlin (and the Government have admitted it) was this : They said they were in favour of maintaining the integrity and independence of the Turkish Empire as a barrier against the progress of Russia. Well, gentlemen, that policy, you know, has entirely failed, and failed because the integrity and independence of Turkey has gone. I have read a note which has been put into my hand since I came into this room, in which a

gentleman enquires what were the causes of the war ; what would have been the policy of the Liberals had they been in power ; and where they could have prevented it ? I have no doubt, had the Liberals been in power, they would have joined with the other European Powers, and would have told Turkey she must expect all the combined influences of Europe against her, and it is perfect folly to suppose for a moment that if the Great Powers of Europe had been united, and if she had not had a secret bottle-holder, in the person of Sir Henry Elliott, she would have succumbed and yielded. Supposing there is a rough man in the streets, insulting the passers by, and you send one policeman to him. Perhaps he is a strong man, and able to cope with the officer, and even able to struggle with two or three ; if you send half-a-dozen they will walk him off as quietly as possible. Turkey was an offence to Europe ; it was a danger to Europe ; and in the sight of Heaven was one of the worst despotisms that ever existed. And yet this Government of ours, so long as they thought Turkey would be a sort of barrier between Russia and British interests, adopted the principle that they would support her, however bad and however infamous the government—if it answered the purpose of “ British Interests.” I am sick of this talking of Russia ; I say it is mean, cowardly, contemptible, to be looking out continually for somebody to defend us from Russia. We can defend ourselves against Russia. Gentlemen, let me say that, without supporting this policy of ascendancy in the councils of Europe, neither I nor any other of my friends, nor the Liberal party generally, are willing that any true British interest shall be impaired, but we believe that Great Britain is powerful enough to defend all her interests. We believe no foreign power will attack her, knowing that in the event of any attack, the probability is, that such power would get the worst of the encounter. We are impregnable if we are attacked ; but if we are to rush wildly and foolishly into the wars of Europe, and mix as we did in the days of the great Napoleon, in some fancied scheme of British interests that will entail the loss of many millions, of many hundreds of millions, of money, and hundreds of thousands of lives, I will tell you that you are striking a stab at the commercial prosperity that brings food and comfort into your homes. Gentlemen, don't let it be supposed for a moment that the Liberal party are prepared to disband the army and give up the navy, and act as though we had arrived at a period of the world in which there should be no further war. Unfortunately, that is not so ; and, when the Tories talk, they talk as though the Liberal party had not kept up the army and navy, just as well as they. You would suppose, when you see them flying that “ Union-jack,” that they were the only people who attended to the army and navy. I have facts, which, if I had time to go into I would read, to show that that is not so. Take the navy, for instance. When the present Government came into power they said we had a phantom fleet. Now, then, they have had the management of the navy for six years, and I will tell you what are the facts as I can vouch, and I wish you to bear this in mind, that the Tories talk as though we, the Liberal party, neglected the navy as a great source of the defence of the country ; and the Tory party has to spend a great deal of the money in making up for the deficiencies of the Liberal

party. The Liberals left the Tories 29 armoured ships in commission in 1874, and on 1st Jan., 1879—the last dates I can give—after the Tories had been in power for five years there were only 28 iron-armoured ships in commission, although they had spent one and a quarter millions more every year upon them than the Liberals. Now, I will give you another fact, that the Government, after spending more money as I have told you upon the navy than the Liberals, have only built 43,221 tons of ironclads in six years, against 60,000 tons built by the Liberals in five years. The Liberals finished 16 ironclads; built seven new ones, and left six for the Tories to finish. Only five of these have been finished, eleven are building, and the Tories have not built a single ironclad of their own construction during the past six years they have been in office. That is only one sample of the way in which these men have spent so much money, and we have got nothing for it; and, as for the army, why, they went into a war and sent out a lot of lads who were even younger than the Lieutenant in the 11th Hussars. And yet, although they have an army and navy, both in a position, certainly not as satisfactory as when they came into office, they turn round upon us and seem to suppose we were neglecting the service. I believe that war, unfortunately, cannot be avoided at the present time, and we must have soldiers, but I am opposed to having a great number of generals and colonels; I want to have it well-managed and properly officered, but I don't want to have it made an opportunity of a great amount of extravagance and abuse. I want to see them properly managed and carried out, not in the interests of a particular class of society, but for the interests of the people at large. Gentlemen, I may just remind you that, notwithstanding the fact that Mr. Gladstone during his term of office maintained the services in perfect efficiency, during the whole time of his office—except only one year—he steadily reduced taxation, and the year I have referred to was the unfortunate year of the Franco-German War, when they had a vote of credit for £2,000,000 for preparations, lest there should be any interference with British interests. In the last year of Mr. Gladstone's Government in 1873, he reduced taxes to the amount of £3,000,000, and the same year he paid £3,200,000 for the Alabama claims, with which his Government had nothing to do. In 1874, the present Government came into the possession, as you all know, of the £6,000,000 of a surplus that Mr. Gladstone left behind as the balance of taxation over revenue, and they proceeded to repeal the sugar duties, and reduced the income tax out of this surplus of Mr. Gladstone, but since that time they have not reduced taxes, but put them on. I will tell you what taxes they have put on up to the present time. They put on £5,500,000 of income tax a year; they put on £750,000 upon tobacco, £100,000 upon dogs, and they have just now put on what they call £750,000 upon Probate duty, but I believe it will produce a good deal more. Besides this increase they have spent twelve millions by those foolish acts in sending a number of vessels up and down the Dardanelles until all Europe laughed at them. They have only paid four millions of that sum back again, and they are eight millions behind at the present moment. Before I sit down I must give you an instance of the way in which they

tax you, because I want every man in Burnley to understand what the Probate duties are. You know first of all that on all property which is bequeathed by any man to his children, there is what is called a legacy duty to pay. I will tell you something about the origin of this duty. Towards the end of last century, when Mr. Pitt, the great Tory Minister, was in power, he brought a Bill into the House of Commons to impose legacy duty upon all kinds of property, both personal property and freehold land. What do you suppose the Tories did in those days? When this Bill was brought in by Mr. Pitt, the Tories divided it into two parts, and adopted the one part imposing a legacy duty upon personal property, but they rejected the part imposing a succession duty upon their own estates. In addition to these legacy duties, there was a probate duty, which was also chargeable upon personal estates, but not upon land. Now I can tell you that up to 1852, the land in this country did not pay a single penny in any kind of duty, and since then it has paid a small sum of money in what are called succession duties, which are intended to be equivalent to legacy duties. During the last 80 or 100 years, personal property has paid £180,000,000 sterling, while landed property has only paid, since 1852, the sum of 17½ millions sterling. In 1876-7, the last year for which I have a return—there was received for probate duty upon personal property, £2,260,176; and legacy duty, £2,840,954; making a total of £5,117,130: while succession duty upon all the land in the three kingdoms only paid the same year £849,340, and yet Sir Stafford Northcote and the Tory Government the very last thing they did in the House of Commons—the very last measure of taxation they have passed—was to increase the probate duty upon the earning and saving of the industry of the country, and not put an additional farthing upon the land which already goes almost scot free. I have the pleasure to tell you that when that proposal was made, I, as your member, stood up in the House of Commons and protested against the duties. To show you how unjust it is, I may tell you that if a tradesman, after saving by the greatest care and industry £10,000, leaves it to his family, they will have to pay legacy duty £100, and the probate duty would be £200 on the old scale, but now it is £275, so that in those circumstances the tradesman would have to pay £375, while the landowner for £10,000 worth of land, would only have to pay about £50. I say it is a gross shame. And it shows that the Tories are not prepared to carry out the taxation of the country in a fair and just manner. I have spoken to you too long. There are friends on the platform who will speak to you with great effect, I am sure. I have been very glad to address this remarkable meeting of my constituents. When I look round and see a number of men with intelligent faces and with earnest looks, I feel as sure as I stand upon this platform that the election rests in your hands. If each of you will not only give me your support, but will also assist in bringing up others to the poll—if you will assist in conveying to the minds of the doubtful some of those strong arguments which I think ought to be addressed to the working classes at the present time, it would, I am sure, help to swell the majority that we should like to obtain at the poll, and I shall be delighted. I want to go back to Parliament with the

conviction that I enjoy your confidence, and I don't want to go as the representative of any section, but because I feel I have been selected as your candidate by the common wish and the desire of the Liberal party, and by no clique and no individual imposing upon you. I want to feel that I shall receive, and to be able to consider the support of the general body of my constituents, so that I shall feel I can speak with confidence in their name; and though, gentlemen, it may happen that, notwithstanding my constant support of the sister country—in which I have taken so much interest—although I have, to the best of my judgment, in the interests of both England and Ireland given my votes. In addition to that—believing as I do in the great principles of civil and religious liberty—I have supported the rights of the Catholic faith, and have never given a vote of a persecuting or unjust character. If, gentlemen, notwithstanding all that, I am opposed by a section of the electors who think fit—in spite of my services to Ireland, and in spite of my endeavour to promote religious equality and justice for them—if they think fit to record their votes against me, I trust that the good sense of the people of Burnley, and of my constituents, will show that no section, no minority, can put me out of Parliament. But I say to you, the intelligent and independent men of Burnley—I wish that my voice could reach out of this room, but you know the circumstances—I trust there will be such a majority at the ensuing poll as will show that no individual shall dictate who is to be the member for Burnley.

No. VIII.

Annual Address to his Constituents, delivered in the Mechanics' Institution, Burnley, Nov. 28, 1881.

Mr. Mayor, ladies, and gentlemen,—I suppose that some of you heard, and I have no doubt many of you have read, the admirable speech which Lord Hartington delivered at Blackburn on Saturday night. I was unfortunately prevented being at Blackburn to support Lord Hartington, but I have this morning read his speech with the most perfect admiration and satisfaction. I think that we, as electors of this division of Lancashire, are indeed privileged to be represented in Parliament by a statesman of such distinguished ability—by one who is connected with this county by property and other relationships, and who worthily represents a distinguished family of this country, a great family which, over several generations, have nobly held up the flag of Liberalism, progress, and reform. Gentlemen, I have read Lord Hartington's speech in regard to foreign affairs and in regard to India with the most unbounded satisfaction. I have felt that his justification of the policy pursued by her Majesty's Government was so complete that it would be utterly unnecessary for me to travel over ground which he has occupied with such great ability, and, therefore, I feel that I shall be relieved, in some measure, from discussing these questions which Lord Hartington has so ably brought before the public. I can only say that I hope

everybody who, at present, may not have read Lord Hartington's speech, will take care to read it carefully, and place it under your careful consideration, for it is one of those political pabulums upon which politicians may feed to their political health. Gentlemen, I must say something about the last session of Parliament, to which my friend, the Mayor, has alluded. It was a most remarkable and unprecedented session. It was very long, very wearisome, and it entailed very heavy labours. It lasted from Jan. 6th to the 27th of August, and I suppose everybody was tired of it. I was, and I daresay you were also. Well, gentlemen, although it was a long and tedious session, I am glad that it was not a barren session. We did pass one great measure which will add to the lustre of the name of our distinguished leader, Mr. Gladstone, and I believe the Irish Land Act will make the last session of Parliament a remarkable session in the future history of this kingdom. But, gentlemen, the session was not altogether one of satisfaction. It was a session in which there were a great many deplorable incidents, and incidents which, in my judgment, tended to discredit Parliament and lower the character of the representatives of the British people. We had to contend against a small body of men in our midst who were rebels against the authority of the Imperial Parliament. A certain section of the Irish members used, I may say prostituted, the forms of the House and the rights of minorities, by turning them into means of obstruction, warfare and disturbance. These gentlemen wearied and disgusted all the other members of the House. They wasted days and weeks of valuable Parliamentary time, and they sought to make Parliamentary government impossible. Gentlemen, this state of things cannot continue. We will not stand it in Parliament, gentlemen. We will not allow that a certain section of members shall stop the business of the people, the interests of the nation, because they choose to obstruct Parliamentary proceedings. Well, gentlemen, the House of Commons has the power, there is no doubt, if it chooses to exert it, to put a stop to any interference with its proceedings. How is this to be done? Well, there are two means of putting a stop to it. One is by limiting the rights of minorities, and by crushing the privileges of Parliament, which are the inestimable heritage of freedom. The other course is to silence the offenders themselves. Gentlemen, I am in favour of the latter course. I say if men are elected to a representative assembly of Great Britain and Ireland, who seek to make the action of that assembly impossible, they must be silenced. Gentlemen, we did something in that direction in last session. We passed a resolution under which the Speaker might "name" a member who was guilty of wilful and persistent obstruction, or who disregarded the ruling of the chair; on the vote of the House that member could be suspended during the remainder of that sitting. Well, now, gentlemen, I do not know whether the Speaker felt that the terms of the resolution, under which this power was conferred upon him, were too restrictive, placed too great a limit on his discretion, or that the Speaker, with that remarkable kind-heartedness and goodness of disposition which distinguishes him, may have been reluctant to act, except in the last resource upon the powers conferred upon him. But it is certain that those gentlemen were allowed to go on to a very great extent indeed

before they were "named," and when that course was adopted the punishment was a mere farce. They were suspended for one night, and the next night they came in ready to play the same game over again. I have a better way of dealing with these obstructives in Parliament. I would give the Speaker greater discretion, greater power, leave more to his judgment, for the time you have to deal with a pressing and urgent necessity, and if he sees that a man is intentionally doing what he knows is with a view of obstructing the proceedings of the House and destroying the power of the legislature, then let the Speaker "name" him, and if he "names" him, then leave it to the majority of the House, but if the House vote that that member has been guilty of obstruction, let him be suspended not for one night, but for the whole Session, or until the House should otherwise determine. Now I venture to say that I believe if we determine to take that course these gentlemen would not run the risk of being suspended for the Session, and if one or two were suspended the evil would be cured. I agree entirely with some of the remarks which were made in the *Times* newspaper a few days ago. The writer in a leading article said, referring to Parliamentary obstruction, "We cannot but hope that when the subject comes to be seriously examined by the Cabinet it will recognise the wisdom and expediency of dealing with it, not so much by a merely mechanical apparatus of rules and forms of procedure as by strengthening the power of the House of Commons to act in a summary manner for the vindication of its authority." Gentlemen, these are entirely my views. I do not suppose that Her Majesty's Government at present have come to any conclusion as to the best way of meeting this difficulty, but whatever their proposals may be, I venture to hope that they will be discussed in a fair and candid spirit, that they will not be made means of party debate and opposition; and I further hope that great care will be taken to guard what I believe to be the most invaluable rights of minorities in the House of Commons.

Let me remind you, gentlemen, that we may not always have a good sound Liberal Government such as we have at present. So far as this, gentlemen, is concerned, I daresay many of you may suppose that it matters very little whether the minority have power of checking the proceedings of the present Government, and I am almost prepared to say, having the confidence that I feel in Mr. Gladstone's great political judgment, in his high sense of political justice, and in his marvellous intellectual power, that I believe, if the Government of this country were left in his hands absolutely without check of Parliament for three years we should have a series of wise and beneficent measures. But, gentlemen, we Radicals do not believe in despotism, even if it is a wise and beneficent despotism. I believe that the people are the only legitimate source of power. That is the doctrine held by the great Liberal party. We believe in a popular House of Commons, and we believe and require that the voices of the representatives of popular constituencies shall be heard in the Parliament of Great Britain. I say that we shall not always have a good sound Liberal Government. I am afraid we shall not. Liberal Governments do not last for ever, and we may have a Tory Government again. I have sat in Parliament as your

representative when a Tory Government was in power. I recollect seeing that Government supported by a large majority of the House of Commons. We used to call it a "mechanical majority," for it did whatever Lord Beaconsfield wished it to do; and my experience of sitting in the House with a Tory Government with a mechanical majority, makes me very reluctant to throw away any of the arms of Parliamentary warfare belonging to a minority. I will give you a few instances. You will remember that the Tory Government brought in a Cattle Plague Bill, with a good object in view. But the restrictions upon the importation of cattle were so severe that if they had been carried out the effect of it would have been to limit the importation of cattle and dead meat, and then you would have had the price of beef and mutton considerably raised. And it was under the extreme terms of this restriction—which was another mode of protecting the interests of farmers by practically stopping the importation of cattle and food—that a number of us in the minority opposed that Bill. There was the Right Hon. W. E. Forster, Mr. Mundella, Mr. Chamberlain, myself, and other members, who used the forms of the House as far as we could, in persistently opposing this Bill, and the result was, that we forced a concession from the Government, and the Bill when it passed did not contain those provisions which would have tended to injuriously affect the supply of food. There was another case—the Army Regulation Bill. Mr. Chamberlain and myself were active in the opposition to that Bill, and pressed the forms of the House to such a point, that we were charged with obstruction. But why? We said that the Bill was a bad Bill, for it included in its provisions severe penalties, of a character that we thought would injure the British Army. We struggled against it, and at length we made that Tory Government yield. We improved the Bill, and prepared a way for what we now have seen done by a Liberal Government—we have done away with that reproach to the British Army, under which the British soldier was liable to the penalty of flogging. Then there was the County Government Bill, which was brought in twice in two sessions of the late Government. It was a most objectionable Bill, denying the rights of the ratepayers to have their representatives on County Boards. A small minority opposed that Bill. Again I was associated with Mr. Chamberlain. We opposed it in two sessions, and succeeded in both sessions, and the Bill was never carried. If it had been, you would have had a Bill which would have stood in the way of legislation. But the course is now clear, and I have no doubt the Government will bring forward, and I trust carry, a reform in County Government. There is no party more interested in maintaining the rights of minorities than the Radical party. If you look back to the history of all great questions, you will find in the first instance they start with minorities. The first is an agitation amongst the people in the country. Gradually public opinion is formed, and then that opinion is represented by a small section of the House of Commons. Perhaps it is condemned by all other parties in the House of Commons, and that minority struggles, and it makes use of the forms of the House of Commons to cause Parliament to consider the question in all its interests, and ultimately it succeeds. Look

at the case of the Anti-Corn Law agitation. I remember when I was a young politician, I was a member of the Anti-Corn Law League. I recollect our representatives in Parliament, a very small number, constantly brought the question under the notice of the House by using the forms of the House. That small portion were headed by Mr. Cobden and Mr. Bright. The feeling in Parliament was so strong, that these men, who are now associated in the history of the country, to whom we are all grateful, and whose names are now household words, and who are spoken of with reverence and affection—these men were charged in the House of Commons with being incendiaries, of setting class against class, and at one time the discussion was carried on to such an extent, that even Sir Robert Peel, carried away by a momentary feeling of excitement, for which he afterwards apologised, charged Mr. Cobden himself with inciting to personal assassination. So strong were the feelings of the House of Commons, that Mr. Bright was hooted down by the House, and refused to be heard by an intolerant majority. But, gentlemen, are you going to prevent the possibility of a minority to be able to act in future? If the House had had that power, they would have shut the mouth of the Anti-Corn Law party in the House of Commons. They would have crushed them, and the progress of that measure would have been put back for some time at least. But, gentlemen, I wish you to remember that the House of Commons is a means of educating the people politically. A man speaks in the House of Commons, it may be he represents a minority, and his words are carried all over the country. These are very powerful means of political education, and I think it would do great mischief if they were in any way crushed. But, Parliament has another great duty. It is the grand inquest of the nation, and if any section of the United Kingdom have any grievance, they have a right to come to this High Court of Parliament, and claim from the House of Commons a hearing of their grievances. Are you going to shut up that minority? Well, gentlemen, people say that we do not pass a sufficient number of Bills. I remember Sir William Harcourt talking about grandmotherly legislation. I think we have had a great deal too much of that. But I say this, that very often Bills are brought forward by the Government, prepared by the permanent servants of the Crown, under the natural influence of their departmental feelings, and these Bills contain clauses which would tend to increase salaries and pensions, and the expenditure is continually increased by Bills that are passed by the House of Commons. Gentlemen, I think those Bills ought to be checked, and carefully watched. Then there are the estimates. Are you going to reject an examination of these estimates? I can tell you that these permanent servants of the Crown, who are a very powerful body, dislike Parliamentary criticism on bills prepared by the department, and of the estimates of the department. I speak of these without reference to politics. For whatever Government may be in power, these most able men, the permanent officials of the Crown, whom Mr. Gladstone called the spending servants of the Crown, and said they were always awake to their own interests—when the country slept they always took advantage of it. There has been a most extraordinary argument

used lately. It has been said that the members of Parliament now are very different from members of Parliament formerly. Of course they are. You do not suppose that members of rotten boroughs are likely to be the same class of members as those returned by populous constituencies? Of course, popular members of Parliament, representing popular constituencies, are very different from members of rotten boroughs. They say many gentlemen go into Parliament and take an intelligent and lively interest in politics. So much the better for the country. They go further and say these gentlemen who take an anxious interest in politics are able to speak and take part in debates of the House. I say, so much the better. But the argument is: we must gag these popular representatives by the *cloture*. I hate the very name of *cloture*. It is not to be applied to the British Parliament. What does it mean? If we have a small minority in the House who want to discuss a question, the majority can gag them. They would have stopped the Anti-Corn Law Question in the House of Commons. They would stop any other agitation in the House. But they say we must apply it to great debates, to prevent them being prolonged to a great extent. What is the fact about these great debates? The longest debate that has occurred in my experience—I think it was a debate extending five days. (I do not know whether my hon. friend, Sir Ughtred, can recollect a longer.) I will tell you what happened. It is generally arranged that two members of the Treasury Bench and two members from the front Opposition Bench should speak each evening during the debate. These gentlemen speak an hour, an hour and a quarter, an hour and a half, and I have heard front Benchmen speak above two hours, to the disgust and impatience of the House. If the Front Bench element of the House of Commons is to occupy four, five, or six hours each evening on these great debates, where do you suppose the members of the popular constituencies can have their views represented? I am not complaining myself that I have not been properly treated. I have been well treated. I have no complaint to make myself, but there are many men quite as, or more able than myself who have a right to complain. I have seen, in these great debates, when a man has sat down, as many as twenty members jump up like partridges to catch the eye of the speaker, and one of my friends, who had jumped up for several nights, said he had been engaged in calisthenic exercises. I know many men well fitted to take part in debates with a right, representing great constituencies, to have their voices heard, who are crushed out. Instead of the *cloture* I would propose a much more excellent way. I say, cut down the length of speeches. Fix a time, say half an hour, over which men are not to talk, to apply to all alike—front Benchmen as well as independent members—and you will probably have better speeches if they do not occupy so long a time. Gentlemen, no doubt the House of Commons has too much to do. Upon that we all agree—it is overworked. But how are we to relieve the House of Commons? This is the great question of the day. I will tell you how I think it ought to be relieved, and I am glad to meet my constituents and to ask them to support me in my views upon this matter. I think, in the first place, we ought to commence de-centralising the business of this country. It was once said of the Crown

what I would apply to centralisation—that its power had increased, was increasing, and ought to be diminished. I think that we have reason to regret that local government and responsibility has been sacrificed in return for bribes from the national exchequer. I believe these grants from the exchequer are, in the end, no relief. They withdraw many motives for economy in the public expenditure, and I believe, also, they destroy local patriotism. Gentlemen, could anything be more degrading to the character of men of great ability and earnestness, when they want to make an improvement, that they cannot do it without being controlled by the officials at London? Do you think that is right? A member of the Board of Guardians has said that that Board wished to spend 20s. on some public improvement, which it was necessary should be done at once. They wrote up to London at once, and Mr. Read said that the correspondence about that lasted for two or three weeks, and when at length the Local Government Board agreed that the Guardians should spend this sum, the time was passed when it should have been done, and it was then useless to spend it. What I want to see is that our local authorities should have increased powers and responsibilities, and I want to see County Boards established of sufficient authority, and having devolved upon them sufficient duty, to relieve in this way the burden upon Parliament. I think also that we may very properly have some arrangement, both in Scotland and Ireland, under which certain local matters could be dealt with in the capitals of these countries instead of in London. I also think we ought to get rid of a great deal of private legislation, for which I think the House of Commons is not very well fitted. I would suggest another improvement in the arrangement of the House, namely, the appointment of Grand Committees, which would have to investigate the estimates as they are laid before Parliament. At present, having taken a great deal of interest in former years in the discussion of the estimates, I am bound to say that I think the arrangements of the House of Commons are not satisfactory. Very often the estimates are debated to inordinate length in regard to very small items, and in consequence very large items are passed amounting to millions of money after half past twelve o'clock at night in a thin House, where nobody takes any interest in the proceedings. What I should like to see would be that large select committees of the House of Commons should be appointed, one for the army, another for the navy, and one for the civil service department. These committees to go through the estimates and report to the House of Commons, and that so far as the House of Commons was concerned in Committee of Supply there should be a considerable diminution of the details required to be gone through. I believe that would tend to economy, to strengthen the hands of the Government against the spending servants of the Crown, and tend to render it more difficult for the Government to recommend large amounts of public expenditure. And I think, gentlemen, that in this or some other way, we shall have very shortly to grapple with the enormous expenditure under which this country is suffering at the present moment. The “bloated expenditure” for the present year was 84 to 85 millions sterling, a sum which is altogether in my judgment an amount that

ought to be unnecessary for the Government of this country. But it must be remembered that in that sum there is a very large expenditure which is a legacy from the former Tory Government. It is not the present Government which has started the expenditure, and in speaking from this platform on former occasions, I have said that when Lord Beaconsfield's Government went out of power they would leave a large amount to be paid by Mr. Gladstone. This is no doubt the case at the present time, and this is the reason why the estimates have swollen to such an enormous extent. At the same time I believe in a thorough investigation of the expenditure, and if Parliament will give themselves full determination to deal with these "bloated estimates," I believe we might save millions of money and still retain the country in a perfectly safe state of defence. Whilst there is a great deal of talk about this obstruction to public business, and while people are beginning to talk about gagging the members for popular constituencies, let me remind you that there is an obstructive power in the country, which does far more to obstruct the business of the nation than any speeches from members of popular constituencies. This is the House of Lords, gentlemen. The House of Lords has continually wasted public time. I may tell you that within my experience we have spent many hours, nay, many weeks, upon public measures that have been sent up to the House of Lords, and they have "amended" them, as they call it, but really they have emasculated them or turned them out with contempt, and then we have had to start again. Gentlemen, we have this great Irish Land Act. We gave very great attention to it in the House of Commons. We spent many days and weeks upon it, and then it went to the House of Lords, and was in the power of Lord Salisbury. If he had been so minded he could have thrown it out, and our labour would have gone for nothing. Gentlemen, Lord Salisbury tried it on, you know—tried to damage it as much as he could, but when Mr. Gladstone was firm, Lord Salisbury had to give way. And the Lords did give way. The result was that the Bill was passed. But the Lords had the power, if they had been so minded, and if Lord Salisbury had been so minded, to have thrown it out. Do you think they ought to have had that power? Lord Salisbury has been making some remarks of a very offensive character in regard to Mr. Gladstone. He has coupled Mr. Gladstone's name with that of Mr. Parnell, and saying that they were both advocates of public plunder. Gentlemen, I think with very much greater propriety Lord Salisbury's name could be coupled with Mr. Parnell's name. They both hate the Irish Land Bill. Lord Salisbury says it plunders the landowners, whilst Mr. Parnell says it is unjust to the tenants. They both hate and denounce it, and both denounce Mr. Gladstone. What is the difference then, gentlemen? In what do they differ? Mr. Parnell has the courage of his opinions, and Lord Salisbury has not. I say that Lord Salisbury, if he did believe that this was an act of plunder, was bound, as a Peer of the Realm, to oppose it. But he did not do it, gentlemen, because he knew that if he had gone against the House of Commons on that occasion, he would have put a terrible strain upon the Upper Chamber. Gentlemen, I believe it is only a question

of time, and there must be some reform—I do not say what—in the Upper Chamber, with a view of bringing it into more complete accord with the feelings of the day. I have spoken of the Parnellite section of the House of Commons as rebels, and I am sorry to say, that I believe that section only represents a wide-spread feeling of rebellion in Ireland. There is a civil war in Ireland. Not the less is that so because you do not see armed bodies of insurgents entering the field and fighting against the British flag. It is a land war, and that has been going on for generations, and until this great Irish Land Act was passed, which has just been carried, it must be borne in mind that the worst elements of the land struggle were allowed to remain untouched. We cannot judge of the present position of Ireland, and of the position of the Government in relation to Ireland, without looking back at some of the past history of this land war between landlords and tenants. We find that in many districts of the country, tenants were absolutely at the mercy of the landowners. We find that the improvements made by the industry and capital of the tenants, were confiscated by the landowners in increased rent. We know that millions of money every year were drawn out of the country of Ireland by absentee landlords, and spent in London or in foreign countries, while the wretched tenantry were starving at home; paying their rent which left them nothing but misery. We know that from time to time thousands of evictions took place, and the landowners sent thousands of families into death, the workhouse, or exile. These were the weapons that were used in the frightful land war, which the landlords had for generations used against the occupiers of the soil. The landlords have been met by assassination, by the most horrible and cruel crimes, such as were a disgrace to humanity, and certainly created in the minds of all of us the feelings of the utmost disgust and horror. But the present Government are not responsible for all this. They did not create this land war, but it had been going on for a long time previous to their entering office. So far as the Liberal party are concerned, it may be said that they, at all events, did from time to time pass great measures, having in view the welfare of the great bulk of the Irish people. Mr. Gladstone himself passed a great measure, which gave to the great body of Catholics in Ireland religious freedom and religious right, and the Liberal party has continually given to the Irish people civil rights. They have repealed many of those unjust laws, which in former generations tended to excite, irritate, and injure the population of Ireland. Therefore, it is altogether preposterous on the part of the Tories, to charge the present Government with being responsible for the present state of affairs in that country. I believe that all parties in England, all Governments in England up to the present time, have mistaken the true remedy of some of the evils of Ireland. Gentlemen, forty years ago, a Royal Commission was appointed to inquire into the subject of Irish tenure, and they reported that what was absolutely necessary to secure the contentment and prosperity of the Irish people was, that the farmers should have fixity of tenure in the land. From that day there have been gentlemen, both in and out of the House of Commons, who constantly pressed upon the Government of the day, that there was great injustice being done to the farmers in Ireland, by

he fact that the landowners were exacting from them continually increased rents on the improvements effected by the farmers themselves. Gentlemen, I believe that if 46 years ago such an Act had been passed as that which Mr. Gladstone has lately carried, I believe we should have had an entirely different state of things at present. I believe that the land war would have entirely disappeared, and that we should have had what we want to get—a large class of contented, industrious, and prosperous tenantry in Ireland, rejoicing in the connection between Ireland and the British Crown, just as the Scotch people rejoice now in the connection. But how was this state of things in Ireland which prevailed when the present Government came into power to be dealt with? There were three modes open to the Government. The first was coercion; the second, remedial measures without coercion; and the third, remedial measures with coercion. The first of these modes was the Tory mode of dealing with the question, or, I might say, the Jim Lowther method of dealing with it. It was not the Liberal mode, and was never entertained for one moment by the Liberals. Mr. Bright gave these memorable words: "force is no remedy." What I understand him to mean was that force alone could not cure the evils of Ireland. He did not mean that the Government did not intend to use force to protect life and property, and maintain the law. The second course which was open was one with which many members of the Liberal party sympathised; but these same members were distinctly of opinion, at the same time, that the Government were bound, by means of their ordinary powers, in the exercise of power vested with them, and the fulfilment of the laws of the land, to punish outrage and crime, and to protect life and property. That is the duty of the Government to do, and it must not be supposed that I have, even for a moment, acted against such a course. The third mode of remedial measures with coercion was the mode the Government, after great deliberation—I believe with great reluctance—came to the conclusion that they would adopt. I believe that in taking that course they only acted in accordance with the opinion of a large majority of the House of Commons. I think they acted in accordance with the great body of the public opinion in the country, and I am disposed to think that if the Government had not taken the step which they did, they would have been unable to pass the remedial measures which they had in their minds. I advert to this subject because I observe that some of the Tories are crying out for more coercion, and I observe that Lord Hartington, in his splendid speech on Saturday, said: "There is one thing we have avoided, which we will continue to avoid: we will not raise—we will not give any excuse for raising—the standard of national enmity and national hatred." Gentlemen, I think those are statesmanlike words. I am very anxious that we should deal with this Irish question in that spirit. I may, perhaps, be allowed to allude to the views which I expressed at the time of the passing of the Coercion Act, in a letter to my dear and valued friend, Dr. Coultate, the President of the Liberal Association, whose absence we regret so much. I said in that letter, which was published in the *Gazette*: "In the speech which I delivered on the Address I expressed a strong opinion that it would have been the

wiser course to have given the first place to the Land Bill, rather than to coercive measures, and subsequent events have confirmed me in that opinion. The Government, however, decided otherwise—no doubt after anxious deliberation—and I, therefore, have felt it to be my duty to give my support, although at some sacrifice of personal convictions, to the course they have decided upon taking.” Now, I have acted upon that during the past session in regard to this question, because I knew that the Government were sincerely anxious to pass a great measure of remedy, and I have had great confidence in the Government. I could not refuse to give a vote in favour of measures which they, upon their responsibility, recommended to Parliament, although I did so with great reluctance and regret. Before we talk about more coercion, gentlemen, I think we should be sure that what we are going to do is likely to have a good effect. I am very sorry to say that coercion has not proved that it is efficient in preventing crime. I am very sorry to say that the accounts from Ireland show that crimes are increasing, and are not punished. The Dublin correspondent of the *Times* of November 23rd, wrote: “The revival of serious crime, and the extension of lawlessness in the country, are subjects of grave concern to all classes and parties. Accounts of attempts to murder, of acts of violence and cruelty, of visits of armed parties to the houses of peaceable farmers, of burning of haggards, and other injuries to property, and the general refusal to pay rent, pour in continuously from different parts of the country; and there is reason to believe that, many as they are, they do not represent the full extent of the anarchy which prevails. Many outrages are committed of which no report is made public.” He also says: “There is a special cause of irritation and excuse for lawlessness to the minds of the populace in the coercion which the Government has been obliged to use, and which has been branded so constantly by Irish agitators.” I may say that when I read these sickening lists of crimes in Ireland, and when I find in the accounts continually these words: “no clue to the perpetrators has been discovered,” I believe that the Dublin Castle authorities and the constabulary of Ireland are not doing their duty in the protection of life and property. I cannot believe that, with the force that we have there, that all these outrages should be committed and that there should be no clue to the perpetrator. What does it mean, gentlemen? We find that these redhanded murderers and these village ruffians who commit these horrible deeds escape, while some wretched farmer or shopkeeper connected with the Land League is put into prison, and the police think they have done their duty. I was talking to a Liberal member of the Town Council in Liverpool the other day, and I said, “What would you say if some district of Liverpool were under an organised system of robbery, and had been for months; in every street property was being stolen—what would you say if the police apprehended nobody and could find no clue to anyone, and then, when you told them that they ought to more efficiently discharge their duty, they apprehended a pawnbroker on suspicion, and put him in gaol without trial? Gentlemen, this is a serious thing, and I have no doubt it is occupying the serious attention of Government at the present moment. I venture to say that the present state of things in Ireland in regard to the execution of the

ordinary law is distinctly unsatisfactory, and I agree with several eminent statesmen who, both recently and formerly, have said they were against giving the Dublin Executive these extraordinary powers, because the officials of the Executive were more apt to rely on those powers instead of calling upon the officials all through the country to put the ordinary law into full execution. I am afraid that we are in the presence of a very serious difficulty. No doubt the inflammatory appeals which are made to this excited people, who are told that 200 or 300 of their "patriots" are in prison on suspicion without trial will cause popular indignation and resentment. But I have faith in the Irish Land Act, and I believe that every man who is placed by the authority of the law in a position of security for his industry, will become a supporter of law and order, and not a supporter of these mischievous and evil men who are disturbing the foundations of society. There might have been an excuse for these men if this great measure of justice had not been passed, but I must say I think it is not patriotic of any Irish leader if he does not tell the Irish tenants to take advantage of this great blessing which has been given to them, and to keep possession of their holdings on terms of such a favourable and permanent character. I should indeed have looked with great gloom upon the present aspect of affairs in Ireland if I thought we had to rely on the Coercion laws alone. But it may be that for some time to come the Government may have these difficulties to contend with, but I am glad to see from the speech of Lord Hartington that it relies not so much upon what we can now do, but upon the necessity of patience and forbearance. We cannot cure in a day evils that have been accumulated by the injustice of centuries. We must give time for the remedy to work, as probably it will do. If you read the reports of the Land Courts you will see how great this remedy is. The evidence given before those Courts supports all we have said that for many generations many of the Irish landowners have been exacting exorbitant rents from the tenants, and the result has been that the Land Courts have reduced the rents 20, 30, 40, 50, and even 60 per cent. I should like you to consider what that means. Take one case. It would appear that Archdeacon Crawford emigrated to Australia some 29 years ago, leaving his agent, Mr. George M'Auliffe, in charge of this property, and he has not since returned. Previous to the departure of Mr. Crawford, and in the year 1842, he executed to all the present tenants or their predecessors leases of their holdings for a term of 21 years, and in some few cases "for life" was added. The rents reserved by these leases may be generally stated to have been equal to 20s. per statute acre. They all expired in the year 1863, and in 1866, Mr. M'Auliffe proceeded to have a revaluation of the estate. Mr. M'Auliffe selected as valuers for the landlord, the late Mr. Charles Brassington and Dr. William Ritcliffe, of Belfast, and he instructed them to visit the lands and estimate the then letting value of each holding. It does not appear that any valuator represented the tenants upon that occasion. Mr. M'Auliffe having procured the valuation, proceeded to act upon it by having, as he has informed us, had notices to quit served upon the tenants—all of them on the same day—and he afterwards had an interview with the tenants, when he in-

formed each of them that the landlord required their rents to be increased, and, after some objection on the part of the tenants, the rents of all were increased from 20s. per statute acre to about 30s. per statute acre. The effect was that while the old rents of 14 of the tenants was £421, it was increased in 1866 to £636, or something like 50 per cent. It was reduced by the Land Courts to £463 a year. But you will observe that these 14 tenants had, for over 15 years, been paying to Archdeacon Crawford £193 a year over what they ought to have done according to the judgment of the Land Court, and this amounts to no less a sum than nearly £3,000 taken out of the pockets of these wretched tenants as a return for their efforts in improving their farms and increasing their income. I will give you another case. It was alluded to by my right hon. friend Sir William Harcourt at Derby, on Saturday night. Sir W. Harcourt quoted the case which appeared in the *Times* on the 21st November as follows:—A gentleman purchased an estate for £6,000. It contained 615 acres and produced a net rental of £316. That is pretty fair interest on money—5 per cent. on land. What happened to that estate. It now produced £560. The rent had been raised from £316 to £560, so that the man who bought the estate got not 5 per cent. but 10 per cent. on his purchase-money. What was the case with those farms? Here is one case. The rent under the lease was £31 8s. 3d., and when it expired it was raised to £100, at which rent the tenant had continued to hold it. That was a farm on which much labour and capital had been expended, buildings which must have cost at least £500 had been erected, and other improvements had been effected by the tenant unaided by the landlord. Here is a man who had a farm at £31, who had expended himself, without a farthing from the landlord, £500 upon that farm, and then he had his rent raised from £31 to £100. Gentlemen, we have heard something about the cry of confiscation. Yes; there has been confiscation, but it has not been the landlord's property, it has been the tenant's. But then, these landlords say they must have compensation. What are they to have compensation for? There is another word quite as good as compensation, and it is "restitution." It was once said by Mr. Bright that if Ireland was 2,000 miles away from England the occupiers of the soil would have settled this question between them and the landowners, who were exacting from them unjust rent. Ireland is not 2,000 miles away from us, and what have we done? Why, for many years past we have spent millions a year upon soldiery and police to back up this land system, under which the tenants of Ireland were paying what are now declared by the Land Courts to be exorbitant and unjust rents, and which we have believed and known to have been the main source of the disturbance and difficulty which we had to contend against in Ireland. But, gentlemen, by the support of our money the landlords conquered in this land struggle, and these rents continued until, fortunately for Ireland, we had this great measure passed last session. But, if England had not backed up the landlords by police and soldiery, the tenants would have conquered in this land war, and would have settled the matter between themselves and the landowners. Talk about compensation under circumstances

like this ! 'He would be a bold man' that would get up in the House of Commons and ask for compensation, and if such a proposal is made, I hope the House of Commons will know how to deal with it on behalf of the people of England and Ireland. I am sorry to say that my time has been expended, and I am afraid your patience is exhausted. A few words in regard to the foreign policy. I shall say very much less than I should have done if Lord Hartington had not made the speech which he addressed to his constituents last Saturday. But I cannot help saying that I feel, as you may all feel, a perfect relief that we are no longer under the Government of Lord Beaconsfield. The breath of British diplomacy is sweetened. You can feel now that there will be no transactions between this country and other countries degrading this country and injurious to our honour. We do not live now in constant anxiety lest there should be some secret convention or movement of troops without the knowledge of Parliament, and threatening the peace of Europe. We know perfectly well that the Government we have at present will be guided in the foreign relationships of this country by high principles of Christian morality and by the mutual rights of nations. I entirely agree with Lord Hartington that if we only wait until they have remedied the evils which they received from their predecessors we shall see certain reforms in Foreign Affairs. I think, if we only look at the state of affairs in the east of Europe, Africa, and India, where we owe so much to Lord Hartington's wonderful value as an administrator, I think the course taken has been one which must give satisfaction to the people of this country. I wish to speak, gentlemen, of the time of the late Lord Beaconsfield's Government, and to say that the conduct of that Government interfered with the progress and prosperity of trade ; we never said that bad trade was entirely owing to the action of the Tory Government. There are ups and downs in trade. At one time we have had very great prosperity, whilst at another period a certain amount of depression. But we say that owing to the policy of Lord Beaconsfield the peace of the world was disturbed, and trade was made worse than it otherwise would have been, and that a revival of trade was prevented. Gentlemen, we have now a Government whose policy will not in any way disturb trade. There could be no doubt that during the last few years the extremely bad harvests we have had, amounting to a loss of 120 or 130 millions, has very seriously interfered with the home trade and the state of agriculture. Under these circumstances, when people are suffering, you will not be surprised that they fly to quack remedies ; and the landowners and some farmers, I am afraid, are flying to these remedies. But we hear in some quarters a quack remedy which is called "Fair Trade." Now, gentlemen, I believe in the fair trade that you should have a right to buy in the cheapest market and sell in the dearest. You may rely upon it that this fair trade and reciprocity cry is only another name for protection. You will find when it comes to the test, that the only articles upon which they can put these retaliatory duties to be of any service to the country would be upon corn and cattle produce in other countries. These gentlemen say they are only in favour of taxing luxuries. What are luxuries? Sir John Holker says that beef and mutton are luxuries, and he does not see why ;

they should not have an import duty put upon them. This is the old Tory idea—beef and mutton luxuries! Again in old days people took good care that these articles should be luxuries. There are doubtless many old men who remember those old days. I can just recollect the end of those dark days up to 1840. The first 30 years of the century (up to 1830) was under Tory rule, and they passed laws, the effect of which was to prevent any cattle being imported. They prohibited corn except on very high duties, and put taxes upon almost everything you consumed. The foreign trade of the country did not increase at all between the years 1800 and 1830, but the population increased. What do you mean by a decaying trade and an increasing population? It means that two men are looking after one master. And when food was up wages went down. I will tell you something about the wages in 1830. Steam looms at that time had only been in comparatively short operation. The steam loom weavers, and in fact all these people, had to work eleven and a half hours per day, and in some cases twelve and thirteen hours; and they earned only 12s. per week. The hand-loom weavers had to work in a state of semi-starvation from morning to night the dull day long, with their families starving around them; and they only earned in Oldham 4s. 6d. per week; in Bolton, 5s. 6d.; and in Manchester they were well off with 6s. 6d. per week. Can you realise such a state of things? At the time when this multitude of crushed down operatives by Tory rule were receiving these wretched pittance, these men who had power in the Legislature, these Tories closed the ports of this country and said these provisions intended for the benefit of this population should be raised in price. And they took toll out of that miserable 6s. 6d. and 4s. 6d. a week, so that their rents might be increased. We look back upon these days as dark days. Mr. Bright, speaking to his workpeople at Rochdale the other day, said:—"I was looking the other day at one of our wages books in 1840 and 1841. I tell you what I found in it, and what I found in our wages book now. The figures are taken over an average of two months at that time, and over an average of two months now, and, therefore, present a fair statement of what happened then and what happened now. Many persons here know, of course, all about the interior of a cotton factory, and I shall speak as if we were in a mill and looking over the people at work. I find that in 1839, the throstle piecers—I need not explain who they are—were receiving 8s. a week, and they were working 12 hours a day. I find that now the same class of hands are receiving 13s. a week at ten hours a day. If they were paid for that work for 12 hours, and paid at the same rate, it would be 16s. a week, or exactly double what they received in 1839-40-1. The young women who worked at the frames had at that time 7s. 6d. a week. They have now 15s., and that is without reckoning the fact that they are working two hours a day less. The rovers and slubbers got 8s. a week, and they are getting 14s. a week now. The doffers are considered a class whose wits are a little too sharp, and are sometimes not very manageable. They used to have 5s. 6d. a week; they now have 9s. 6d. The warpers in those days, as far as my recollection serves me, were all women; they earned on the average of the two months 17s. 6d. a week.

The warpers now are all men, and they have earned in the two months an average of 35s. 6d. a week." I think there is a great improvement, and I can tell you how it operates. We get a very large quantity of beef and corn in exchange for the cotton we send away. In 1840, all oxen, cows, calves, sheep, lambs, bacon, and beef and pork were prohibited. What occurred in 1880? We imported oxen, cows, &c., 7½ millions sterling, sheep and lambs 2½, bacon and hams 11, beef 2½, pork ½, making a total of £24,000,000 worth of beef, mutton, and other articles introduced into this country in one year. What has become of it? It has been eaten. And I can tell you what would have become of you if it had not been so. You would have clemmed. In 1840 every person on an average consumed 11lb of foreign butter; in 1880, the average was 7½lbs; cheese, 1840, 11b; in 1880, 5½. They all tell the same tale. Wheat and flour in 1840, was 42lbs; and in 1880, was 210lbs per head. An average of 3½ imported eggs were consumed by each person in the country in 1840, but the number had increased to 21½ in 1880. Of potatoes, in 1840, scarcely any were imported, but in 1880, 31lbs per head were introduced and eaten. There was no rice imported in 1840, but in 1880 upwards of 14lbs per head. Sugar, 15lbs per head in 1840, in 1880 no less than 54lbs per head. The importation of tea had increased from 1½lbs per head to above 4½lbs. All this means increased comfort on the part of the working people. In 1840, people who were fortunately in the position in which I was, did not go short of either butter, or sugar, or bread. It was the working-classes and their families that were short, because the average per head included the average of each member of a man's family, and if the rich had plenty the poor must have had comparatively little. Look at the export trade. In 1840 the exports of British produce amounted to £51,308,000 in value, and the imports to £62,000,000; but in 1880 our exports amounted to £223,000,000, and our imports to £411,000,000 in value. In 1840, British produce exported amounted in value only to £1 18s. 9d. per head; last year to £6 9s. 5d. You know what that means. There is not a single item in the statistics that does not tell the same tale. The population of the United Kingdom increased from 26½ millions in 1840 to 34½ millions in 1880, whilst crime decreased from 23,047 convictions in 1840 to 11,214 in 1880. Paupers in England and Wales in 1850 numbered 920,000; now they are reduced to 803,000. The number of children in inspected schools in 1851 were a quarter of a million, now they are 3¼ millions. In 1840 there were 22,645 vessels belonging to the United Kingdom, with an estimated tonnage of 2,768,000; last year they increased to 25,185, with a tonnage of 6,574,000. The property of the country, as shown by the Income Tax returns has increased from 308 millions in 1855 to 578 millions in 1880; and the working classes have also improved in their position, because whilst in 1841 there were only 24½ millions in the Savings Banks, in 1880 there were 75½ millions. I cannot suppose that with facts like these the working men of this country will be gulled by this new cry of fair trade. I am sure you would not be gulled by it, and I am certain that if any attempt in Parliament is made to raise that question they will find that the large majority of public opinion is against them. In

conclusion, I will now say that, while we have been looking back upon the past, and contemplating some of the difficulties of the immediate future, I am full of hopeful expectation of the future. The work of the Liberal party is not ended, and just as we have looked to the successful records of the past which have added to the happiness of the people, we may look to the future and believe that the Liberal party will be instrumental in carrying other great reforms that will still further add to the happiness and prosperity of our country. Gentlemen, I feel convinced, with the statesman at present at the head of affairs in the House of Commons, that we shall not be satisfied to stand still. I hope that in the immediate future the great land question of England may be dealt with in an enlightened and thorough manner. I hope also that the county suffrage and the redistribution of seats may be dealt with at an early opportunity. I hope also that the large expenditure which now presses upon the country may be reduced, and the taxation of the country relieved. In every direction I trust that we shall be able to make progress in favour of your welfare. I can only say, gentlemen, that I have been very happy to serve you so far, and if the opportunity is afforded me to support measures which I believe to be for your interests, and the interests of the country at large, you may always rely upon me that I will not spare any time, any labour, or any energies that I possess on them.

No. IX.

Annual Address to his Constituents. delivered in the Mechanics' Institution, Burnley, January 29, 1883.

Mr. Mayor and gentlemen.—This division of the County of Lancashire has the great advantage of being represented by one of the most distinguished members of Her Majesty's Government, and during the last few days Lord Hartington, at Bacup, and at Darwen, delivered two speeches on the policy of the Government, which I read, and which you must all have read, with the greatest pleasure and satisfaction. Feeling that Lord Hartington has placed the case of the Government before the country, in such terms and with such arguments, that it will be very difficult indeed for the Tories to find any hole in which to enter; I feel it a little difficult to follow so soon after those great speeches of Lord Hartington, in which he naturally dwelt upon subjects which I must to some extent allude to. At all events I have this great relief, that in regard to two very important questions of the Government policy which he discussed at Bacup—I mean Egypt and India—I shall not need to dwell at any length. I shall only say with regard to Egypt, that while as you know in conjunction with my distinguished friend, Mr. Bright, I was not able fully to concur in the views of Her Majesty's Government at the commencement of the proceedings, yet I am happy now to say that as the past has been accomplished, and the Government have taken a position of responsibility in regard to Egypt, I am happy to be able to say from this platform; that I entirely concur in

all the measures which her Majesty's Government, at the present moment, are taking with regard to that country. We must look at it from the fact, that the English are in Egypt; that we have for one reason or another—reasons which have been perfectly satisfactory to a great body of the people of this country—we have intervened in Egypt, and have taken the responsibility upon our shoulders to a great extent of the good government of the country. I entirely approve of the course which her Majesty's Ministers are taking with the view, if possible, to secure that Egypt shall have a good and stable government. I entirely approve of their efforts to protect the Fellaheen from the unjust exactions of the Mahommedan tax-gatherers. I entirely approve of their desire that there shall be courts of justice established throughout Egypt, which may secure that life and property shall be recognised in that country; and I also very much approve of the desire, which has been expressed by her Majesty's Government, that as far as possible the people of Egypt should have some popular representation in the Government of their country, so that their views may be heard in regard to the administration of the affairs of the country. Egypt is described by Lord Hartington, very truly, as one of the richest and most fertile countries in the East, and I do not hesitate to say, that if by the influence of Great Britain, by the direction which British influence will give to Egyptian counsels, that fertile and rich country may have peace and protection to its industry, I think that the British interests will be very much promoted, and that the happiness and prosperity of the Egyptians themselves will be promoted. Therefore, looking to it as a most fertile and rich province, knowing that if its industry is so developed, it will be a great outlet probably for British commerce, I may say, that I think in the interests of the Egyptian people themselves, as well as in the interests of Europe, the Government having found themselves now in Egypt, would not be justified in leaving Egypt without taking a good guarantee for the future good government of that country. Gentlemen, you will see from this, that I am not prepared to take any hostile position in regard to the Egyptian policy of the Government. I consider they are now engaged in it with a serious responsibility, but having got into that position, I should be the last man in the world to say that they should get out of it without taking care that the results of the great sacrifices which this country has already made should be secured in permanence to the advantage of the people of this country. With regard to India, gentlemen, you know the Tories say about Egypt, "Oh! Mr. Gladstone has followed Lord Beaconsfield's policy in regard to Egypt." They cannot say it about India. At all events, they cannot say that Mr. Gladstone has in any way followed Lord Beaconsfield's policy in regard to India, because the policy of Mr. Gladstone is as different from Lord Beaconsfield as light is from darkness. We do not hear now about "scientific frontiers." We hear nothing of excuses for seizing the territory belonging to our neighbours. We now have not 60,000 or 70,000 British soldiers seeking to keep down the fierce, independent Afghans, under British rule. We no longer are under the delusion that we may have our interests in India attacked by Russia. No, gentlemen, that is not the policy

of Mr. Gladstone's Government. They withdrew the troops from Afghanistan, they relieved the Indian Government from the great expenditure and from the increased taxation rendered necessary by maintaining the military occupation of Afghanistan; and they are going beyond that. They know perfectly well that the best safeguard for our Indian possessions is to secure the happiness and contentment of our Indian subjects. We rule over 200 millions of human beings—a great mass of seething humanity—occupying that great territory of India. They all look up now to the British Crown as to a second Providence, and that ought to be the policy of the British Government, as I believe it is the policy of the present Government, to act, so to speak, as a second Providence. We should, by our influence and authority, cast upon the people of India, as far as possible, the blessings of development of industry, the development of happiness and contentment, which will attach them to our rule, and which is the great safeguard of the dominions that we possess in India. The Government are dealing in that spirit with India. The late Government, so far from treating the natives of India with any regard or consideration—so far from looking to the public opinion of the natives to find out what they wished, in order that they might so shape the Government of the country as to suit the wishes and welfare of the inhabitants—they passed the Vernacular Press Act, the effect of which was to crush out the expression of public opinion by the natives, to crush out the press which was written in the native languages. I am happy to say that one of the first things our Government did on getting the authority in India was to repeal the barbarous Press Act, and to extend to the people of India the right, through the public press, of expressing their desires in regard to any change that may be necessary in their condition or the administration of the country. The Government, also, are seeking (very wisely, in my opinion) to develop habits of local self-government in different parts of India where the natives, up to the present time, have had no voice in the management of their own affairs. The Government are seeking to arrange for the establishment of local councils, something approaching to municipal government, allowing for the great difference in the character of the country and the position of the inhabitants—they are seeking to give to the inhabitants of India, as far as they possibly can, gradually, the rights of self-government in respect to the affairs of their own locality. But, beyond all that, we have in India, in Bengal, a large number of tenants of the land who, under the Bengal land system, have unfortunately been exposed to the exactions—the unjust exactions—of the Zemindars, or owners of land under the Government. Seventy millions of inhabitants of that province are so subjected to these exactions. Gentlemen, the Government are dealing with that question, and I have no doubt the outcome of it will be to give to this large population protection from the exactions of the unjust Zemindars, which has led to a very large increase of rent on a very unfair basis. It appears to me that all these elements of British policy in India will certainly tend to the popularity of the present Government, and give prospect, in my opinion, of the future contentment of the inhabitants of that great country. Having alluded to Egypt and India, I may now, gentlemen, say something

about the last session of Parliament. I have often heard it said that there ought to be a Nine Hours Bill for the House of Commons, and I am disposed to think there ought to be something of the kind if we are to have such long sessions and such late hours as those that we have experienced during the last two or three years. Gentlemen, the last session was a very long and anxious one, and was very troublesome, and told very much upon the health of members of the House. Amongst the rank and file of members many of them have had to go abroad to recruit, or otherwise to go under medical treatment. Amongst those who have taken a prominent part in the management of the business of the House of Commons, Sir Stafford Northcote, the leader of the Conservative party, broke down. I cannot mention Sir Stafford without saying that, while I denounced in no measured terms the late leader of the Tory party, Lord Beaconsfield, for whom I had no respect, and in whose principles I had no confidence, I am bound to say in regard to Sir Stafford Northcote that I believe he is a good and honourable English gentleman. I believe he is a worthy statesman, who, according to his judgment, will do that which he thinks to be right; he is courteous, he is obliging, and he has secured the attachment of both sides of the House of Commons to such an extent that I have no hesitation in saying that the Liberal members of the House of Commons have, equally with the Conservative members, followed his departure from this country for the benefit of his health with the sincerest wishes that he may be restored to the House of Commons with his accustomed vigour. In the ranks of the Government several of my right hon. friends suffered severely; but the greatest member of the Government, the greatest member of Parliament, the greatest statesman of the age, Mr. Gladstone, suffered. Gentlemen, you who are out of the House of Commons cannot realise, as we do who sit in that House from day to day and night after night, the devotion, the self-sacrifice, the enormous intellectual efforts of our great leader. I have watched him night after night, have seen him sitting there until between half-past twelve and half-past one o'clock in the morning, and I remember that I had the opportunity during the debates last November to allude in Mr. Gladstone's presence to the fact, that he set a brilliant example to many younger members in the House in the great devotion that he gave to the public business of the country. Not only in the House of Commons, gentlemen, but in his administration he piled upon his shoulders a large amount of work which I think he might have thrown upon other hands. He took not only the great office of responsibility of the first Lord of the Treasury, but also took the office of Chancellor of the Exchequer, which was, no doubt, from the great desire he felt, that in the administration of the finance of the country something should be done to relieve the burdens of the people. But I have no doubt he found that it was utterly impossible in the present pressure of public business for any man, however powerful, however vigorous, to sustain the double office of first Minister of the Crown and Chancellor of the Exchequer, and I am very glad now that he has found it right to retire from the office of Chancellor of the Exchequer, and being a personal friend of Mr. Childers, who is the new Chancellor, and having been associated with.

him in public work for many years, to be able to say to you, gentlemen, that I believe that we shall have in Mr. Childers a most efficient Chancellor of the Exchequer, who will do much to control the expenditure of the country. After all our labours, after all our sacrifices, and after all this endangering of the health of members, it cannot be said that we did very much business during the last session. It has been said that it was a barren session; but still, gentlemen, it was not altogether a barren session. There were a number of very useful acts passed during that session. Still, it is a fact that many of the measures which we should have been glad to see brought forward and passed were not brought forward, or being brought forward were not proceeded with, because of the time of the House of Commons being occupied by one great subject. Gentlemen, you know perfectly well that the great work of last session, as of previous sessions, was Ireland. That was our work; and let it be remembered that the Irish difficulty, which was the one we had to deal with, is not the fault of the present Government; it has been a difficulty which has lasted for generations. I remember nearly 50 years ago when Sir Robert Peel, the distinguished Conservative statesman, was called upon to form a Government, he said his great difficulty was Ireland, and that difficulty has existed ever since. Why has there been a difficulty in Ireland? Gentlemen, the great difficulty has simply arisen because for many generations past there has been misgovernment and injustice in Ireland? Gentlemen, while we are irritated, and while we are justly irritated by many things that are occurring, let us never forget that great fact. It was said once, on great authority, that "as a man sows so shall he reap," and that is quite as true in regard to nations as in regard to individuals. If nations sow seeds of evil they must reap the evil. We sowed seeds of evil in Ireland; we had religious oppression and persecution; we had the religion of the great body of the people ignored and trampled upon for the sake of a minority; we had trade restriction which destroyed the industry of the country; and, greater than all, we had land-laws, the effect of which was to rob the tillers of the soil of a large portion of their earnings. Gentlemen, these were seeds of evil that were sown by former generations, and they bear bitter fruits. They bear fruits in misery, discontent, crime, and rebellion. But it is mainly to the Liberal party we owe the uprooting of many of those seeds of evil. We have got rid of all restrictions upon the trade of Ireland, and we removed the religious disabilities of Ireland. But it was to the statesmanship of Mr. Gladstone more than to any other statesman that the Irish people owe the greatest benefit that they now enjoy. When he came into office in 1869 some of the first measures that he dealt with were measures of justice to Ireland. He disestablished the Irish Church, and he amended the Irish Land Laws. Gentlemen, the Irish landlords are mainly responsible for the evils of Ireland, and I am anxious that you should remember this, because I do not want us to be carried away by feelings that are naturally awakened, to forget what has actually been the state of things in Ireland. I say that the oppression of the Irish people by the Land Laws has been the main cause of the accumulated misery and bitterness of feeling of the Irish people.

It was well known that this was the cause producing all these evils, for so long ago as 1845 there was a commission appointed, of eminent men, under the Government of Sir Robert Peel, which was presided over by the Earl of Devon, and which is called the Devon Commission. In their report—nearly 46 years ago, bear in mind—they reported upon the extreme wretchedness of the Irish peasantry, and recommended as the only remedy the passing of legislative measures to secure to the tenant “the fair remuneration to which he is entitled for his outlay of capital or of labour in permanent improvements.” The Commissioners added that “they were convinced that in the present state of feeling in Ireland no single measure can be better calculated to allay discontent, and to promote substantial improvement throughout the country.” Gentlemen: that was not all; there were select committees appointed by the House of Commons at various periods of Irish distress, and they all reported the same thing. Irish Members stood up in the House of Commons and told the House again and again that the Irish farmers were being robbed of the fruits of their labour. Well, gentlemen, all this passed on year after year, and yet nothing was done until 1870, when Mr. Gladstone came into office, and when he passed his Land Act. Now you must bear in mind we find now, from the action of the Land Courts, that two or three millions sterling a year at the very least, during the past 50 or 60 years, have been taken out of the pockets of the Irish tenantry unjustly. Gentlemen, if you multiply three millions by fifty you get one hundred and fifty millions of money drawn out of the pockets of the Irish peasantry, by landlords who very often resided out of Ireland, and spent the whole of these sums of money away from the country. Do you suppose that could go on without telling upon the industry and welfare, and upon the contentment of the Irish people. Mr. Gladstone sought to deal with this in the Act of 1870. That Act was, to a great extent, a failure. He did not calculate that the landowners of Ireland would be able to so manage matters as seriously to interfere with the good working of that Act, and in 1879 and 1880, there were bad harvests in Ireland, which brought all this misery to a culminating point, and then it was that we, the present Parliament, under the leadership of Mr. Gladstone, had again to deal with this Irish difficulty. Gentlemen, Mr. Gladstone brought in the Land Act of 1881. That, I say, was a charter of freedom to the Irish tenants, and the greatest Act of Justice to Ireland that has ever been passed by any administration. Now, gentlemen, that Act, important as it was, was in danger of being destroyed again by the landowners, because, owing to the high rents that had been charged upon the Irish tenants, a great many were in arrears and unable to pay them, and it was under the Act of 1881, that unless they paid their arrears they could not take advantage of the Act. The landlords right and left were proceeding to evict these Irish tenants for the non-payment of these unjust arrears, and if they had been allowed to go on you would have had great parts of the country depopulated, and the landlords entering into possession of the soil, having taken advantage of their own injustice to the tenants to sweep them off the soil, because they were not able to pay the arrears of unjust rents. Gentlemen, I had the pleasure of denouncing in the

House of Commons this conduct on the part of Irish landlords, and the evictions. I look back upon the speech I made with great satisfaction to myself, because I considered the course they were taking in regard to these evictions, in calling upon the Government to give them soldiers and police to sweep these people off the surface of the ground, was a most iniquitous course, and I was glad, as your Member, to denounce it from my place in the House of Commons. Gentlemen, Mr. Gladstone met the difficulty, and he determined—and this was the business we had to do last Session—he determined to bring in the Arrears Bill, the object of which was to enable a Government to assist the tenants with a view to prevent their being evicted. Gentlemen, we are all horrified by the crimes which occur in Ireland. We believe that so far from doing any good to the country they are the greatest possible injury to the best interests of Ireland, and the Government, while they were engaged in this beneficent legislation of passing the Arrears Act, were also bound to take measures to put a stop to crime in Ireland. It was the duty of the Government. They could not shrink from the duty which is the first duty of a Government, namely, that of protecting the life and property of its subjects. Gentlemen, when the Coercion Act of 1881 was passed, and when I stood upon this platform last year, I expressed to you my very grave doubts as to the wisdom of the Act, and I dare say you will remember that what I said was this, that I objected to men being put in prison on suspicion and without trial. I said that I was altogether in favour of punishing criminals, but that if the police when a crime had been committed in a district, instead of taking the necessary measures to get the criminal, are able to put men into gaol without any trial, simply because they are open to suspicion, I said “You will never have a good working of the Protection of Life Bill.” I said that I considered that the police in Ireland were not doing their duty; and I also said that I had a great doubt as to the efficiency of the Coercion Act of 1881. Well, now, gentlemen, I believe that my views in regard to the Act of 1881 were not supported in all quarters. But the Government came to the conclusion that the Coercion Act of 1881 was, in point of fact, a failure, that it did not succeed in the way that they wished it to do, and that they considered the retention of men in prison on suspicion was not the best way of dealing with crime in Ireland. In consequence, they brought in last Session—and that occupied a considerable amount of time—they brought in their Prevention of Crimes Bill. That, gentlemen, is a very severe measure, but I am not prepared to say that it is more severe than it ought to be. I am not prepared to say that the Government have taken measures or powers greater than in the extreme circumstances of the case they were justified in asking Parliament to give them, and there is this advantage about the present act, that no man is punished in Ireland unless he is proved to be guilty. He is to be tried, and shown to be guilty, and then he is punished. Then, gentlemen, I consider there now seems to be a greater hope that, by the instrumentality of the powers which the Government possess, that these crimes will be materially diminished, and that criminals in Ireland will be

taught that the arm of the law is strong enough to reach them. As soon as they are taught that, you will find that there will be less crime, and it will be a great blessing to Ireland, if we are able to put down these dreadful crimes that are committed in that country. Now, gentlemen, Lord Hartington at Bacup in his speech on Ireland—and without going over the ground again, I should like to say that in a very great part of that speech I entirely concur, for I think his view of the situation was a very moderate one, and his justification of the policy of the Government was very complete—alluded to the fact that whilst the Tories were constantly pressing upon the Government that they are not doing sufficient to put down crime, they are not at all anxious that the Government should take any very active part in carrying out the Land Law Reform and seeing that justice is done to the tenant. No; they want force without remedy. The Government apply remedy with force. Gentlemen, Lord Hartington made use of these words. He said, “It should be understood throughout this country, and especially in Ireland, that it is the determination of the Government to enforce the laws which Parliament has sanctioned in Ireland, in regard to the restrictions and limitation of the powers of the landlord, with as much firmness, and as much impartiality as they exercise the laws in regard to the criminal.” That is the proper policy to deal with Ireland. I am glad to say—I will trouble you with figures, because they have been quoted elsewhere—that under the Land Act of 1881, there are an increasing number of cases being settled every month in the Land Courts, and a greater number of cases every month outside the Land Courts, by mutual agreement between the landlords and tenants. It is a most satisfactory circumstance, that during the last two or three months there has been a far larger proportion settled out of these Courts by agreement between landlord and tenant, than was the case in previous months. The fact is, the landlords are beginning to find that they cannot wriggle out of this great Act of 1881; that they must accept it, and now that they are beginning to find that it must be accepted, they are beginning to make arrangements with their tenants, and I believe in a large number of cases these arrangements are being made. Gentlemen, it is not only that these arrangements are being made, but in the minds of all the tenants in Ireland, there is now a sense of security which did not exist before. A man can lay out his labour and capital upon his farm; he can know that he is providing future development of his produce; he may know that he will increase future harvests, and he has the sweet satisfaction of feeling that these increased harvests will belong to himself and his family, and will not be swept up by the landlords through increased rent. I am glad to see that the Arrears Act is also acting with considerable advantage in a large number of cases, and I am very much gratified to add, that during the last few weeks the amount of crime in Ireland has materially decreased, and there seems to be some better prospect that life and property in the country will be felt to be more secure. Now, gentlemen, as the result of our Parliamentary labours, have I not given you a case to show that this Parliament and this Government have given to Ireland perhaps the greatest boons that any Parliament or Government could give to a suffering country?—

And yet, notwithstanding that these boons have been granted by our great Liberal leader, supported by the earnest zeal of his followers, he is met by ingratitude and hostility on the part of the Irish party. Yes, I have seen it ; I have regretted it. I have seen that, notwithstanding all these benefits, Mr. Parnell and his followers do not hesitate to call into play the most hostile and bitter feelings towards the Government, as though, instead of being great benefactors to that country, they had been hostile to its interests. We must be very careful that this ingratitude on the part of the Irish leaders and this bitterness of feeling do not lead us to forget the principles of justice. Let us, at all events, have a clear conscience before all men, and, as Liberals, do justice to all men, even if they so far forget themselves as to return our benefits with injury and hatred. I can only say, gentlemen, that my hope for Ireland is not so much in any theories of a possible development of national self-government, as it is in the fact that I believe that the measures which have been taken in connection with the land will create in Ireland a large number of men, having an interest in the soil, being surrounded by their own property, and being anxious to see that the country should be settled and at peace. I have no doubt that if the country were to become more settled and the people more regardful of law, that they would find the English Liberals would be most anxious to give them every political right that we enjoy ourselves. I may say as a Radical myself that while I am willing, at all times, to give to the Irish people the most perfect justice, I think it right to say at this crisis that, so far as I am concerned, I will be no party, in any way whatever, to give them any separation from the Government of this country. I would give them, as far as I could, local government, but as regards Imperial Government, I believe it is not to the interests of their own nation, and it certainly is not to the interests of the United Kingdom, that we should give encouragement to the establishment, so close to our shores, of an independent nationality. Therefore, gentlemen, I think it is just as well to say that, because I believe that the views which I have expressed are the views which are entertained by the great body of Liberals in this country, and I consider it will be far better for the Irish leaders to ally themselves with the Liberals in this country with a view to obtain those measures of reform which may be safely and properly granted to them, instead of seeking, by a very hostile attitude and by unreasonable demands, to alienate the support which would otherwise be extended to them with the greatest cordiality. Gentlemen, the Irish party have not only been hostile to Mr. Gladstone out of the House of Commons, but in the House. As I told you when I had the pleasure of addressing you last year, they became rebellious in the House of Commons, and they sought to put a stop to the passing of any measure, or to the administration of public business. That obstruction on the part of Irish members in the House had really got to a point which you who never witnessed it can hardly imagine, and led, necessarily, to a desire of the Government and the House of Commons that there should be a considerable change in the rules of procedure, to prevent the possibility of such serious obstruction to public business. Now, gentlemen, there has been some little mistake on the subject of these Rules of Procedure. They have been

called the *Cloture* Rules, as though the *cloture* was the main part of the rules. This is altogether a mistake. *Cloture* is only a very small part of the Rules of Procedure, and because I did not like personally a *cloture* by a bare majority it was supposed that I was opposed to these rules. That was altogether a mistake. I believe that under the conditions of business in the House of Commons it was purely necessary that there should be a considerable change in the Rules of Procedure in the business of the House. But for the Irish members we should never have required it. However, we did require it, because they were using the forms of the House to prevent the business of Parliament. The *cloture* is, as I said before, only one among a very large number of these resolutions. Under the resolutions the power which members had of jumping up in the House at the beginning of business and moving the adjournment of the House, and occupying the whole time of the evening with the discussion of some question which was not anticipated, probably not of importance, and which was only raised to lose time, is now put under very serious limitation. Then there used to be the opportunity, every time a motion for going into Committee of Supply on having the estimates before the House, was proposed, for anybody to bring on a motion on any subject whatever, which had to be discussed before the House went into committee; and I can assure you that many a time when I have gone down to the House with a view to take part in the proceedings, in criticising the expenditure of the country, the entire evening has been occupied by these men making motions on going into Committee of Supply. That is done away with so far as Mondays and Thursdays are concerned, and there are several improvements with regard to various wastes of time in divisions and other obstructive means, in addition to which, the punishment of obstructing members who disregard the ruling of the Speaker is very much increased. Gentlemen, all these are important matters, but the point on which I did feel some hesitation was in this, as I said to you last year, the *cloture*. The power to close a debate, I contended, in the interests of minorities, ought not to take place unless there was about two-thirds majority of the House. Now, gentlemen, I was in the House of Commons when the Tories were in power. I was there when Lord Beaconsfield was Prime Minister, and if Lord Beaconsfield or a Minister like him became Premier again, and if he put in the chair a Tory Speaker, it is quite clear that when a bare majority had the power, he could check any discussion on any subject that he chose to exert his power upon. I have no belief for a moment that that power will be used by Mr. Gladstone, and certainly not by the present Speaker; but I took a line which I believed to be a right one in urging privately upon the Government (because I took no part in public discussion) that I thought a majority of two-thirds would facilitate the passing of the other resolutions, and would commend itself generally to the judgment of the House. The arguments I urged, Mr. Gladstone was good enough to take very carefully into his consideration, and after considering the whole matter, I was informed that the Government were prepared to make one or two concessions, but they were not prepared to accede to a two-thirds majority. However, they made a very important concession, because it

requires under the *cloture* resolutions that the Speaker shall not only be satisfied before putting the *cloture* that it is the evident sense of the House, but shall also be satisfied that the subject has been adequately discussed. If the Speaker is honourable, as the Speaker that we now have, and as we hope to have for many years to come, and indeed always—Speakers of high honour and integrity—under the resolution as it stands, he must be satisfied that it is the evident sense of the House that the subject has been adequately discussed before he puts the *cloture*. That, gentlemen, I think, is a very great safeguard, and that safeguard having been granted, I did not think it was necessary in any way to prolong my opposition to the *cloture* being adopted in its present form. Therefore, I thought it right to give the Government my support in the final and important division on that matter. There is also another important matter with these Rules of Procedure. There is an intention to appoint two Grand Committees to deal, one Committee upon legal subjects, and the other upon trade, and I hope they will facilitate business. But I should like to see another advantage granted to the House, and I may have an opportunity of bringing it some day before the attention of Parliament. What I want to see is, that there should be a strong committee, not consisting of a large number of members, but a strong committee, consisting of able Members of Parliament, to investigate carefully each of the three branches of expenditure—Army, Navy, and Civil Service estimates. I do not hesitate to say that no reform is more necessary than a reform in the national expenditure, and it almost seems as if, under the present arrangements of the House of Commons, it was almost impossible to deal with the separate votes in such a way as effectually to keep them down. I will just remind you, gentleman, of something about the expenditure, and will compare the expenditure of the last year ending March, 1882, with the expenditure of the year ending March, 1870, and I take 1870 because it was the first complete year, so far as expenditure was concerned, after our great Liberal return in 1868, when Mr. Gladstone became Premier of England, and directed his attention very strongly to matters of expenditure. In 1870 we paid in interest, and for the reduction of the National Debt, 27 millions; last year 29 millions. That of course goes to the reduction of the debt, and perhaps gentlemen won't object to that very much; but still, that sum of two millions comes out of the taxation of the country for that year. In 1870 we paid for the army (including Indian home charges) 13½ millions; in 1882, 17½ millions; which in twelve years is an increase of four millions of money. In 1870 we paid for the Navy 9¾ millions; in 1882 10¾ millions. Then in the Civil Services expenditure and Civil List charges we paid in 1870, 11 millions, and in 1882 we paid 18½ millions. Including the cost of collection of revenue of this country, we paid in 1870, 68¾ millions, and in 1882, 85½ millions, or an increase of about seventeen millions in twelve years. On behalf of the present Government, I may say that they are paying a bill that was "chalked up" to a great extent by Lord Beaconsfield. I told you on this platform two or three years ago, when that firework policy of Lord Beaconsfield was going on, "you will have to pay for it, not only as taxation in this

year, but they will leave a lot for the Liberals to pay after them." And the Liberals are paying and have paid several millions of the debt incurred by Lord Beaconsfield's policy. In addition to this larger expenditure, there is the question of education. Now, gentlemen, I do not begrudge this money for education at all; I think it is important that the people of this country should be well educated, and if we have to expend sums of money it will all come right in the end. Give me an enlightened and educated people, and I will answer for their governing themselves somewhat better than ignorant people, and they will get the advantage in the long run. There is an additional increase in the cost of the Post Office and Telegraph, for which we get a return by increased business in these departments, and then there have been several grants in aid of local rates, which was a policy recommended by the Tories, and which I myself think is open to serious objection. But making all allowances for the causes of the increase of expenditure, I think you will agree with me that the present expenditure is an extravagant and unnecessary expenditure, and is what it has been called in former years—a "bloated" expenditure. For many years I have always, when an opportunity has occurred in the House of Commons, criticised and condemned unnecessary expenditure in the public departments. I believe that I have got a good deal of ill-will from the "spending servants of the Crown" in consequence of my having taken that line. I certainly can trace very often, in the newspapers, where these gentlemen very often use their pens, evidence that in consequence of the course that I have taken in opposition to the national expenditure, I have been met with a good deal of adverse criticism, and, I think I may say, unfair imputations. In 1879 you will recollect I brought forward resolutions condemning the expenditure of the Government, which was supported by the entire Liberal party, and I have been taunted during the last Session by the Tories, who had said that I had not attacked the present expenditure because it is an expenditure incurred under a Liberal Government. I had an opportunity last November of alluding to these taunts, in the presence of Mr. Gladstone, and I said that I had only been prevented by the pressure of public business from calling the attention of the House to the expenditure of the country, which I considered to be unnecessarily large. Mr. Gladstone cheered the remarks I made on the occasion, and I think I may say there is no man in the House of Commons more anxious than the Prime Minister to cut down the expenditure. But you have no conception of the difficulties of keeping down the national expenditure. The House of Commons is full of people who are interested in keeping up the expenditure, and out of the House itself the spending servants of the Crown have great command of the press, and use the press continually, in order to put down any opposition to public expenditure. Gentlemen, if we are to do anything effectively in the House of Commons the people out of the House must help us to do it. In the House of Commons and in the departments, Mr. Gladstone might say now in regard to these spending servants of the Crown, what David said of old, "The sons of Zeruiah are too strong for me." Gentlemen, I will not dwell further on the past Session, but

shall now very rapidly just indicate a few things that I think the Liberal party have to do.

You know, gentlemen, we, as Liberals, do not always content ourselves with looking to the past, our motto is "onward," and we look to the future. At the present moment I think I may say that the circumstances of the time are entirely in our favour. We have a strong and united party. We have a chief at our head who is a most powerful minister. In fact, I observe that the *Daily Telegraph* said: "Mr. Gladstone is now beginning to be everywhere recognised as a national rather than a party chief." I recollect some years ago, during the Jingo fever, that the *Daily Telegraph* railed to such an extent against the "People's William," and used language of such an extraordinary character, that in some comparison somebody remarked that it was an appropriate fact that the initials of the "D. T." stood for "delirium tremens" as well as *Daily Telegraph*. The writers are now free from that excessive use of stimulants that they were taking four or five years ago; and now, in their calmer judgment, give utterance to what I must confess to be a very correct statement and a very important truth. But, gentlemen, while we are so well off as regards our own party—the strength of the party and in regard to our leaders—let us not feel so elated as to prevent us placing an eye of compassion upon our unfortunate opponents. Because just what we are at present the Tories are not. I notice that Col. Stanley, when he was speaking at Manchester the other day, seemed to be rather concerned at the fact that people were saying the Tories were disheartened and disorganised, and he said:—"They had been hearing a great deal about the Conservative party falling to pieces, that it was disheartened, disorganised, and that in fact it was a party without existence and almost without a name." Now, gentlemen, he is altogether wrong there, when he said it was without a name. Quite the contrary; it has a good many names. The position that the party is in is not that it is without a name, but it has a number of *aliases*. When I first came into political life—I am afraid to say how many years ago, for I was then a school boy—our opponents were called by the respectable name of Tories—true blue, Church and King Tories. Then I remember perfectly well how they became Protectionists, and then they became Peelites, and afterwards they took the name Constitutionalists, and then became Tories again. Now a number of them are saying they are "Tory Democrats." I do not know what a Tory Democrat is, nor do I suppose that you know what he is. I presume it means something like the Imperialism of Napoleon. I believe Tory Democracy is very nearly connected with Jingoism, and I don't think the Tory Democrats of this day are likely to be very successful. However, gentlemen, while I dispute that they have no name, I must say that just at present we are right in saying they are disorganised and disheartened. They certainly have very weak leaders. They are weak in the head—I mean weak in the head of their party. I recollect very well during the debates on the Arrears Bill when the Tories were attacking the Government, and night after night Mr. Gladstone got up and crumpled the opposition, and with that abundance of resource and eloquence that never failed, continually

answered and destroyed the arguments that were brought against him, I remember a very distinguished Member of the Tory party saying to me, in the smoke-room after one of these encounters between Mr. Gladstone and Sir Stafford Northcote, "This is not a fair fight. It is just as though you were playing a man at a game of chess, and he has the Queen and you have not. The fact is our front Bench are a set of old women." That was a very distinguished Conservative member; and I can tell you another thing. Now we hear Mr. Gladstone being called "the grand old man." The name was given to him, I believe, by a Tory opponent. But I will tell you another name: Sir Stafford Northcote is called "the grand old woman." In reading over the speeches delivered by these Tory leaders, I have been looking to see what they intended to do. I can make very little out of Sir Richard Cross's speech, but when I got to the end I thought I had come across something material, for he said, at Southport: "The time has come when the Conservative party must not be afraid of showing what Conservative principles are, and when the moment for striking comes, the Conservative leaders will strike, and strike home." On reading them, I said to myself "Brave words, Sir Richard." Then Col. Stanley came to Manchester, and took an entirely different line to Sir R. Cross. He said, "he hoped that they would not think he was speaking in the language of despondency if he said that at the present moment they must possess themselves with patience." He might have quoted the passage "in patience possess ye your souls." Mr. Disraeli, many years ago, when he was a Radical or a Republican—at all events before he was a Tory—said that the Tory party had no knowledge of the past, no appreciation of the present, and no plans for the future. It does seem to me that they have no knowledge of the past, because I observe that another Tory speaker, Sir William Hart Dyke, said at Ashbourne, on Thursday: "The Conservative policy which had been so productive of good to the great masses of the country would be their policy for the future." Now, gentlemen, something has done great good to the masses of the country, no doubt, for I find on looking at the consumption of imported food between the years 1840 and 1881, that the people of this country are eating a vast deal more of many good commodities than they did before 1841. I find in bacon, butter, cheese, rice, sugar and tea, wheat and other articles for home consumption, we imported many times per head the amount in 1881 that we did in 1840. Do we thank the Tory party for that? I was in political life in 1840, and I remember that the people of this country could not eat imported beef and bacon. And why? Because the Tories supported laws that prohibited them being brought into the country. I can remember the time when the people were half starved for want of bread, because the Tories refused to let corn come into the country even when the people were starving. That was the Tory policy, and it was not the policy that did great good to the great masses of the country. But it was our—the Liberal—policy that compelled the Tory monopolists ultimately to yield and to grant us Free Trade, which gave us, not only plentiful supplies of food, but also increased, to a very large extent, the commercial industry of the country. While in 1840 we only sent out of

this country in British produce £1 19s. 9d. per head, in 1881 our exports amounted to £6 14s. per head, meaning an enormous increase of employment of the people, and an enormous addition to the purchasing power of the nation. Gentlemen, it is to the Liberal party that we owe these great benefits to the masses of the country. It is also to the Liberal party you owe your education, your political rights, with the ballot to protect them; and you may be thankful in consequence of the improvement which has taken place in the masses of the country, pauperism has rapidly decreased, being very much diminished as compared with the pauperism in 1848. Thus, while the population is increasing pauperism is diminishing. We claim that this is the result of the policy of the Liberal party, not of the Tory party, and we say further that the policy the Liberal party has adopted in the past we intend to adopt in the future. We know what we want, though the Tories do not seem to know what they want, and I will make them a present and tell them what our principles are. We want the County Suffrage and the Redistribution of Seats. I cannot dwell upon it, but I may say this: I am quite disposed to agree with the opinions which have been expressed, that we should deal first with the County Suffrage and then with the Redistribution of Seats. Gentlemen, everybody feels that it is impossible to maintain a policy of excluding towns like Accrington, Padiham, Nelson, and Brierfield, and other localities of thriving working people from the household suffrage. What can be the justification of giving men on one side of the road the power to vote and refusing it to the men on the other side. You cannot maintain that. Again, I have a list of 150 towns, each possessing a population of above 10,000, and containing altogether three millions of people, that have no representation at all except the County representation. This, of course, is a monstrous shame. Then we come to the Redistribution of Seats. The teeming populations of our country have sprung up and gone on increasing for past generations, while miserable agricultural villages have gone on decaying. These small decaying places have representatives in Parliament, while the large teeming populations of our boroughs have either insufficient representation or no representation at all. I am strongly of opinion that we should, as soon as possible after we have dealt with the County Suffrage, get a wide redistribution of seats, so as to secure that the people shall be fairly represented in the House of Commons. People often say that all they want is not numbers, but interests to be represented. What interests? Class interests? I do not want class interests to be represented. I believe the safeguard for the whole interests of the country is to get the largest representation you can. If they say that wealth must be represented, I would urge that wherever you have population you have wealth, and these centres of population were not only teeming hives of industry, but hives with a good deal of honey in them, which is not found in the small, decaying, miserable towns in other parts of the country, which have representation conferred beyond their rights. There are 91 boroughs with a population of less than 20,000 each, and these at the present time return 109 members; while 22 boroughs with a population of upwards of 150,000 only return 48 members; so that a population of between six and seven millions is

represented by 48 members, while a population of under one million is represented by 109 members. Gentlemen, I could go on with numbers of facts of that kind, but you know them all. What we want is to get rid of those little boroughs in one of two ways—either throw them into the counties, or group them together, where two or three places of moderate size are within easy reach of each other. What is wanted is that the large population of this country shall be fairly represented, and that the members shall be taken from small populations in order that they may be given to the large populations. Another question that we have in view is that of County Government. We hope to see the counties provided with institutions that will enable the county ratepayers to deal with their own affairs, by Boards who will be responsible to them. I want to see also at a very early period a great reform of the Land Laws, and I hope some day to devote an entire evening's lecture to the subject of the land question. I should like to do so very much, because it is a question embracing so many considerations, and of such enormous proportions, that I cannot do anything like justice to it in a general speech giving an account of my Parliamentary stewardship. But, both with regard to the ownership of land, and with regard to the tenancy of land by the farmers, we shall have to deal with it, so as to give the farmers absolute compensation for their improvements, and a security in the form of tenant right, which will enable them to deal with the land in confidence, and to put into it their capital which they are not able to do at present. Another subject which is rapidly rising into importance—in fact, it is a subject on which public opinion is ripening perhaps, more rapidly than any other subject—is the question of reform in the Licensing Laws. I have no doubt the present Government will deal with that question with great prudence and care, as it affects large interests, and can not be dealt with without recognition of those interests. But one thing is quite certain, that the Government feel absolutely bound to consider the question, with the view, if possible, of offering to the public a solution which, while having due regard to those interests, will at the same time relieve the country of a very large amount of evil which at present exists. Another subject calling for attention from, and which should receive the serious consideration of the Government, is the Abolition of Parliamentary Oaths. I do not myself believe, that either experience or history give any proof whatever, that any oath taken by legislative assemblies has ever in practice been found to be so far binding upon those assemblies, as to prevent their taking legislative action in opposition to the oath. On many occasions kings and rulers have required members of their legislative assemblies, that they should take oaths of allegiance, and in many cases these legislators have thought it right, and without any regard to the obligation of the oath, to change the Government, or to remove the ruler from power. The fact is, it is altogether in my judgment, a mistake to suppose that the taking of this oath is either necessary for the protecting of the Crown, or for any advantage whatever. I should be perfectly content, myself, to go up to the table and make a declaration of allegiance to the Crown. I believe a declaration would have quite as much binding effect as an oath, for while I am no Quaker or Separatist, and while

I do not hesitate to take an oath if I am required to do so in a Court of Law, yet I am only expressing a feeling I have had for a great number of years, when I say that I have a great dislike to taking it, and I would very much rather affirm. I cannot but remember that we have the words of our Great Teacher "Swear not at all." I feel that so strongly, that I never for many years past have taken an oath without some dissatisfaction. But I am not allowed to affirm, not being a Quaker or Separatist. I think the question which is now before Parliament has come to the point that it is absolutely necessary that there should be an attempt seriously to deal with it, and I should prefer the abolition of the oath rather than a measure making it optional. I consider that the electors of Northampton have a right to return whom they please. I am not an elector of Northampton, and am not called upon to say whether the electors of that constituency have exercised a wise choice or not, but I consider it is their right, and I have all through declined to stand in the way of the exercising of that right. At the same time I would infinitely prefer that Mr. Bradlaugh should come to the table of the House and affirm, and I want a law to be passed to enable him to affirm. I consider the electors of Northampton have a perfect right to return whom they choose, and Mr. Bradlaugh has a right to do what he thinks is good in fulfilling the mandate of his constituents. Therefore, I have declined all through to be a party in any way to obstruct in the slightest degree the free choice of the electors of Northampton, and when I have had an opportunity, both by voice and by vote; I have supported that free choice. I have spoken of the disorganisation of the Conservative party, but do not be mistaken. No doubt, as Colonel Stanley said in his speech, that were an emergency to arise, the whole of the Conservative party would rally round their leaders as they have done in former times. And what emergency? If you seek to give any great increase of political power to the great masses of the community, then an emergency will arise, and then this disorganised and disheartened party will rally back under their leaders, and will fight shoulder to shoulder against great measures of reform. Gentlemen, we must do the same. Do not suppose that because at the present moment we occupy a commanding position, and our opponents are in an unenviable position, that we are going to march to victory without passing over a battlefield. We shall have to fight the battle as we have done before. We shall have to hold by those standards of liberty and progress, which we have done before, and which our political forefathers held up before in times past, and under much greater difficulty. We shall have to prove ourselves worthy of our political ancestry, and I have no doubt that with a united party, and with our great leader, although it may be that before any great act of reform can be passed, we may have to pass through the trouble and turmoil of a dissolution of Parliament, I have that confidence that, in a new Parliament, we shall have an equal force of Liberals on our side, that we shall again hold up our standards to victory and carry great measures of reform.

No. X.

Annual Address to his Constituents. delivered in the Mechanics' Institution, Burnley, December 10, 1883.

Mr. Mayor, ladies and gentlemen :—I wish, in the first place, to express my thanks to my constituents in Burnley for the great kindness and consideration which they have shown to me during the past twelve months ; and, in making this expression of gratitude, I do not include simply my political friends, because I have the pleasure of saying that from my political opponents I have received many instances of kindness and consideration during the last twelve months. It is my desire, gentlemen, to stand at all times on the best terms of good fellowship with my political opponents in this borough, as well as with my friends. I don't expect them to agree with me in politics, and I cannot agree with them in politics ; but, at all events, so long as I am the member for Burnley, I feel that I shall have pleasure in receiving from them their consideration ; while it would, at all times, give me the greatest satisfaction if I could serve them in any way in my power as the member for the Borough. The last Session of Parliament was a laborious one, and so far as I am concerned, as having been a member of the Grand Committee on Trade, I must say that I gave a great many hours to Parliamentary work. Perhaps you may think that the results of our Parliamentary labours were not very extensive. Still it was not a barren session. We passed some very important measures, and, amongst others, we passed a Corrupt Practices Act. If all boroughs were like Burnley we should never have required a Corrupt Practices Act. I have the pleasure of bearing testimony to the fact that, so far as I know, both sides in Burnley have conducted the elections in a manner creditable to themselves. Perhaps I may be allowed to say that I believe that the Chairman of the Conservative party at the last election was as much opposed to anything like corruption or unfair play as the Chairman of my Committee, and I have every reason to believe that the last election was conducted in a most honourable manner on both sides. Unfortunately, in a great many boroughs, that was not the case, and corruption went on to an extent in the smaller boroughs that it was a disgrace to the kingdom, because if you have a number of men willing to give their votes for the sake of enjoying some little consideration, of treating or of bribing, you have a state of political character which is degrading. Any man who sells his vote for money, or for a drink of beer, is a man that does not deserve the franchise. We thought that in order to stop the corrupt practices in these peccant boroughs we should pass a very stringent Act, and we have passed a stringent Act of Parliament. Of course, bribery, as you know, was always condemned and always punished ; but the present Act goes very much further, and, in regard to treating even, it inflicts an equal punishment upon the man who gives the glass of beer and the man who receives it. If any man sells his vote for any consideration whatever, he is just as much an offender as the man who buys the vote, and both are equally liable to punishment. That punishment is very severe, because, for each offence,

parties are liable to a fine of £100, with twelve months' imprisonment ; and they are also liable to be excluded from the fulfilment of any public office of trust in the borough in which they reside. That, no doubt, may be considered very extreme ; but, at the same time, I believe that the state of corruption had got to such an extent in certain boroughs, that it was absolutely necessary that we should apply a very strong remedy. That remedy has been applied, and now the men—and, unfortunately, in some boroughs there were a great many men—who were willing to sell their votes for considerations of one kind or another, will find that in future, if they do indulge in practices of that kind, it will not only be the candidate and his committee that will be liable to punishment if they allow themselves to be led into illicit transactions of this character. Another part of the bill has reference to the expenditure. It was thought right to cut down the expenses upon elections. The feeling of the House of Commons was this : that it is not an absolutely necessary qualification for a member of Parliament that he should be rich, that there might be many men quite capable of fulfilling the duties of a member of Parliament who might not be rich, and we wanted to make such a law that any man might stand for a borough without being exposed to a very great amount of expenditure. The result is, the requirements of the Act are that in every constituency the expenditure shall be kept down to a certain amount, and that the number of paid agents is very limited. Gentlemen, I think that is a principle we ought all to admire. What are politics worth if each individual elector has no individual interest in the question submitted to him ? Why, the greatness of this country depends upon the enlightened judgment of the electors of the kingdom. What we want is that men shall think out political questions—shall come to a conclusion as to what is right in the government of this country, and then, having informed their minds to the best of their judgment, and to the best of their opportunities, and to the best of their ability, then they ought to be prepared, in a feeling of responsibility which attaches to this great duty which devolves upon them—they ought to be prepared to take their part when the constituencies of the country are appealed to for a judgment upon any great question of administration. Well, gentlemen, we shall have to rely to a much greater extent than at any former period upon the voluntary and the unpaid agency of members of our political party. I feel perfect confidence in regard to Burnley that the Liberals of this borough, when the time for an election comes, will be prepared from love of the cause—from recognition of the great principles at stake—will be prepared to devote themselves to the great questions in which we are involved and will take their part in the labours that may be necessary in order to secure a successful result. There was another Act called the Agricultural Holdings Act, which was passed with the object of giving to tenants a greater security in their improvements upon the soil. I do not think it went far enough, and in the House of Commons I did my best, along with other members, to make the Bill stronger. But the House of Commons consists for the most part of landowners. We have got landed magnates on both sides of the House, and I believe that the Government passed a Bill quite as strong, probably, as any Bill that they were likely to be able to pass in the pre-

sent Parliament. But they have left the sitting tenant subject to what I consider to be a great danger. Landowners or land agents may raise the rent of a sitting tenant upon his improvements, and unless the sitting tenant gives notice to leave his farm and does leave it, he has no chance of having these improvements paid for. Now, my object and the object of other members in the last session, was this: we desired that if any landlord gave notice of an advance in rent that the mere effect of giving such notice of advance should compel him to make compensation for any improvements that the tenant had placed on his farm. I think that was a very right and just proposal, but we were not successful in carrying it. But, gentlemen, there is nothing very final in the legislation of this country, and if the farmers at the next general election make use of the ballot—as I hope they will make use of it—they may, perhaps, think fit to return members to Parliament for the counties of England who will take more interest in the farming question than some hon. gentlemen have at the present time. In addition to these we passed a Bankruptcy Act and a Patents Act, both of which, I trust, will be of great use to trade, and will remove many of the evils of which the country has had to complain. There were also other Bills of a useful character—upon which I will not dwell—which were passed. So that altogether, I think, we may say that the last session of Parliament was not a barren session. Now, there was one part of the administration with which I was not satisfied. You know I am always candid when I have the honour to address my constituents, and I am bound to tell you that I was not satisfied, and I am not satisfied, with the amount of expenditure which is at present made, under the control of the Government of this country. Now, I am quite prepared to make great allowances for the present Government. They came into power under most difficult circumstances; they have had to pay millions of money for the debts created by their predecessors. The late Government raised the expenditure of the different departments to a very high point, and you will understand that it is rather a difficult thing, when expenditure has been raised up to a certain amount, to bring it down again. Making these allowances, I am bound to say that I consider the expenditure of the country is entirely unwarrantable, and ought to be materially reduced, and on the 5th of April I had the honour of proposing in the House of Commons a resolution in these terms; “That, in the opinion of this House, the present amount of national expenditure demands the earnest and immediate attention of her Majesty’s Government, with the view of effecting such reductions as may be consistent with the efficiency of the public service.” In putting the resolution before the House of Commons I drew a contrast between the expenditure which existed in 1870-1 (the first full year after the former Gladstone Government came into office), and the expenditure as it was proposed for the current year. I took the case of 1870-1, because I remember perfectly well that Mr. Gladstone’s Government, having come into power with a very large amount of public opinion in favour of a reduction of the expenditure of the country, did take immediate and very strong steps with the view to reduce the expenditure, and in 1870-1 they placed upon the table of the House very considerably reduced estimates for the services for that year. Now, I

said to the House of Commons, and to Mr. Gladstone, and the Government, that I thought they ought to seek, as far as possible, to go back to this expenditure of 1870-1; and therefore I contrasted the amount of expenditure this year with the amount in that year. I mentioned that in 1870-1 the net expenditure on the army was £11,750,000, while in 1883-4—only twelve years afterwards—it was £15,600,000, showing an increase of £3,850,000. In regard to the navy, I stated that, whereas the net expenditure in 1870-1 was £8,927,000, 1883-4 it was £10,757,000, making an increase of £1,830,000, the total increase on the army and navy during the last twelve years being an annual charge of £5,700,000. I am not one of those who want this country to be without defence; but what I do not hesitate to say is this, that I believe millions of money are wasted in these great services, and that if the pruning knife was applied to them, and if a great many excrescences were cut down, you would have an equal efficiency of army and navy at a very much less expense than that which exists. Gentlemen, I will not dwell upon the civil expenditure. The expenditure on account of the Civil Service has increased £8,000,000 since 1870-1, including a considerable sum for the reduction of the debt. Then there have been large grants for local taxation, several large sums having been devoted with that view by the late Government, and I think devoted in a most mischievous and objectionable manner. Still, there is that expenditure of, I believe, three millions a year, which is given to local taxation, not in an economical manner, but, I think, in a way calculated to destroy the management of local affairs by the localities themselves. Then there is the additional cost of the Post Office and telegraph service, and that, of course, we cannot complain of. We get a much larger income than we did formerly from those services, and we cannot carry on a great business in the Post Office and telegraph service without having an extra amount of expenditure in wages and in other ways. Then there is education. I notice from the Burnley papers that my right hon. friend, Mr. Mundella, who is certainly a most efficient and admirable Minister of Education, said from this platform that I did not object to the increased expenditure on education. My right hon. friend was right in making that statement, as I think the expenditure for education is one that this country may very well make with the greatest advantage, and I believe that if we can get an educated people, it will be an investment of money perhaps as valuable as it is possible for any investment of money to be made. Therefore, I do not object to that increase of expenditure; but I do believe, even admitting that there are certain grants of expenditure which cannot be very much objected to, and in fact, can hardly be prevented, I do believe that even in the civil service there is room for a considerable paring down of many items of expenditure. One point in the expenditure of this country, which to my mind is a very alarming point, is the gradual increase of the pensions paid to all persons who are engaged in the service of the Crown. I should not object to pensions properly controlled and properly applied; but I do not hesitate to say, that this pension system is a system which is open to very serious abuse. Many men get pensions for ill-health, who are very vigorous for many years afterwards; other men are pensioned for what they call

re-organisation of offices, the object being to give a flow of promotion, so that the people down below may have a chance of getting up two or three steps, and so the country is called upon to pay a certain number of people, who are quite capable of discharging the duties which they have to fulfil in order to get them out of the way, so that the others down below may have a step in promotion. To show you that this is a matter which requires some little consideration, I find that the pensions in the army and navy, and in various branches of the civil service amount altogether, according to a calculation, which I believe to be correct, to £6,636,377 a year. That forms a very serious item in the expenditure of this country, and I believe it is an item that requires very close examination. Moreover, it is so easy to give a pension. A man wishing to retire, and there is somebody else wanting his place, he is pensioned off; but as soon as a pension is given, it ceases to be under the control of Parliament, and becomes a permanent charge upon the resource of the country, and you working men of Burnley, every year pay a certain amount of your hard-earned earnings to meet this demand of nearly seven millions a year for the pensions which are paid to all branches of Her Majesty's services. Well, now, that will have to be inquired into. No doubt military and naval pensions must be to a greater or less extent given; all I contend for is not that pensions should be abolished altogether, but I say that pensions should be given under very much more stringent conditions than those which are observed at the present time. The fact is, gentlemen, we have to struggle in the House of Commons, and the Government have to struggle, against the great fact, that there is an enormous army of public servants in the different branches of the State, called by Mr. Gladstone in one of his magnificent speeches in 1868—which I myself had the pleasure of hearing at Warrington—"the spending servants of the crown." He said that these spending servants of the Crown were always alive and awake to their own interests, and he said that when the public went to sleep, these spending servants never went to sleep, for then was their opportunity. I observe that our distinguished representative, the Marquis of Hartington, in his speeches the other day, and also my Right Hon. friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer, in his speech a few days ago, both alluded to the difficulty the Government were under, in keeping down expenditure in consequence of the great pressure which was put on Government by the spending servants of the Crown. That is the difficulty, and unless the public are awake to their interests, Government cannot withstand this pressure which is put upon them in every department of the State. You know the House is supposed to investigate the estimates in Committee of Supply—the Government prepare the estimates, very much under the advice of these very men who are receiving the money out of them, and place them on the table of the House, and then we go into consideration of them in Committee of Supply. Lord Hartington in his speech—and I must say that I feel very much flattered by his kind allusion to myself—pointed out that the Committee of Supply was practically powerless; that it consisted of a few active supporters of the Government, a few of us economists below the gangway, and a number of people on the other side of the House, in fact on both sides of the

House, who were interested in getting as much money out of the public purse as they could possibly obtain. What chance have we of making any headway under these circumstances? The principle is, that when a vote is challenged—as we have often challenged votes—the Government treat it as a party question, and every member supports his own side when the bell rings. We may have had a good discussion in the House; we may have shown a monstrous waste of expenditure; and I remember a case that occurred last Session, where we showed the folly and the absurdity of a vote which was proposed of £60,000 to repair the Queen's yacht. The Queen had only used it I think about eight times in eight years, and I believe that every time it had been used, it had cost the country (putting all the expenditure together and dividing it by eight), about £11,000. We denounced this, and, in fact, we carried with us the members who were in the House at the time. We showed the absurdity of it, and there was no reply. We did not object to the Queen having a yacht, but there was another first-class yacht, and there were tenders of the yachts that Her Majesty could use, while here was a yacht that was not in order, and it was proposed to spend £60,000 upon the repair of it. We opposed it, and had all the argument on our side. Government were nowhere in supporting it, and I do not believe that they liked the job. But the bell rang, and members came rushing in from the smoke-room and libraries, who had never heard a word about it, and went into the lobbies. Of course, the Tories voted with the Government on that occasion, and the Liberals who heard it was a Government question went with the Government, and we were beaten. That is a case in point, and Lord Hartington said truly that you had very little hope of securing any very considerable reforms in the expenditure of the country, by the discussions in Committee of Supply. Well, then, what is to be done? In the motion which I made on the 6th April, and which, I am happy to say, Mr. Gladstone accepted with the greatest cordiality—in the speech I made on that occasion I suggested that it would be a great advantage if Government would consent to the appointment every year of a Grand Committee or strong Select Committees, to consider the different branches of the estimates—the army, navy, and civil services. Mr. Gladstone evidently was very much disposed to approve of that suggestion. I had the honour of meeting the Premier at a friend's house some few weeks afterwards, and he said that owing to the extreme pressure of public business, the Government had not been able to formulate any course in regard to my resolution, which they had accepted, but he assured me that the thing should have the cordial attention of the Government, and he hoped to make some proposals that would be satisfactory to me and the other economists in the House. I knew what a difficult position Mr. Gladstone's Government was placed in by the pressure of business, and I did not hesitate to say that I had no wish in any way to hurry the Government to a conclusion, but that I hoped they would be able to adopt some means that would give to the House a much greater control over the expenditure than they had at the present time. You will observe from the speeches of Lord Hartington in Lancashire that he evidently indicates that the

appointment of Grand Committees for the consideration of the estimates is under the consideration of the Government ; and I do hope that that course will be adopted, and that we may have some efficient means by which we can check the constant craving of these spending servants of the Crown to get more money out of the public purse. They are like the daughter of the horse-leech—they are always crying “Give, give,” and if you do not give they say the services are going to destruction, that they are inefficient. I have told you that we are spending several millions a year more on the Army and Navy than we were in 1870, that in fact last year we were actually spending no less a sum than between 26 and 27 millions a year. I wish you, gentlemen, to observe that whenever there is any discussion made by military or naval men, even in regard to any foreign operations of our Army and Navy, or in regard to any possible demands upon them, these great authorities in the Army and Navy are always saying that the services are inefficient. They say they are not up to the mark, that our Navy is not strong enough, that our Army is under-manned—that in point of fact the whole services are going to the dogs. Yes, going to the dogs to the tune of 27 millions a year. Well, I hope the country will become alive to its own interests ; and I venture to think that, judging from the experience of other countries, you can get an army and navy for 20 millions, with the volunteers and the militia, that ought to answer every purpose that this country requires. Now, gentlemen, I have spoken about the past, but I shall have to say something, I suppose, about the future ? I observe that the *Standard* of last Monday complains that we Liberals have not fulfilled our promises. The *Standard* says that when we were opposing Lord Beaconsfield’s Government we promised—and in the Midlothian speeches—promised that there would be a great calm. “Where is the calm ?” says the *Standard*. “There are wars and rumours of wars.” Well, gentlemen, I never said, and I do not suppose any other speaker said—certainly Mr. Gladstone never said—that because a Liberal Government came into power all the ambitions and turbulencies of foreign countries would cease. Did we ever say that because a Liberal Government came into power the great kingdoms on the Continent would immediately proceed to reduce their armies, and would cease to have designs against each other ? Did we ever say that the advent to power of a Liberal Government would make the French Government sensible and wise ? We said nothing of the kind, and the French Government now are humble copyists of Lord Beaconsfield, and are carrying out a policy of adventure, disturbing the world exactly on the same lines that Benjamin Disraeli did a few years ago. We cannot prevent that, and what we said was this : that whilst there might be disturbances abroad, the Liberal Government so far from fomenting these disturbances would tend to minimise them. We said they would try to promote the peace of mankind, that they would not indulge in a policy of adventure ; and I claim for this Government that that has been their policy, that they have avoided, to a very great extent, the errors into which Lord Beaconsfield’s Government fell. I had intended to have said a few words about the state of affairs in connection with this particular article in the *Standard*, and in which allusion is made

to India. I had intended to have said a few words about the Indian question, but I have on my left hand a most valued friend of mine with whom I am in the habit of working in the House of Commons, and I believe that my friend has given some attention to this Indian question recently. Therefore, I shall be very glad if he will so far oblige as that he will deal specially with this important question, because I find that I have so much to say that I shall not be able to say half of what I intended to say, and I shall leave the important matters of the Ilbert Bill and Indian Administration for my friend Mr. Briggs to deal with. You will be aware that during the last few weeks there have been a number of speeches made by the Tory leaders. I do not know whether you have read them ; but I have read them, and dreary reading they have been. The Tory leaders, from Lord Salisbury and Sir Stafford Northcote down to Cavendish Bentinck and the Right Hon. James Lowther, have been engaged in instructing the people of this country upon political affairs. The fact is, these Tory leaders look back on 1878 and 1879, and then they remember that during those two years Mr. Gladstone went through Midlothian and made a number of speeches, which had the effect of creating such a strong public opinion against Lord Beaconsfield that they swept that Government from power, and these gentlemen, from Lord Salisbury and Sir Stafford Northcote down to Cavendish Bentinck and James Lowther, seem to think that they can do the same trick with the present Government. Because they saw in 1878-9 that before the trumpet-tongued voice of Mr. Gladstone the walls of the Tory Jericho crumbled and fell ; they think they can therefore perform the same feat with their penny whistle. I think, gentlemen, they are entirely mistaken in more than one particular. In the first place, I think it cannot be considered uncharitable to say that these noble lords and right hon. gentlemen are very much smaller men than Mr. Gladstone ; and in the second place there is this great difference between them : Mr. Gladstone in his Midlothian speeches dealt with great principles, high principles of conduct, both in regard to home and foreign affairs, which stirred the conscience of the country. He attacked Lord Beaconsfield because he condemned the immoral policy of Lord Beaconsfield's Government, but he sought to arouse the people of this country to a point in regard to home and foreign affairs—a high point in political morality. In regard to home affairs he laid before them proposals of progress, the amelioration of the masses of the country, of an increased political power. In regard to foreign affairs, he laid down the great rule "Do unto others as ye would that others should do unto you," and it was that rule that he laid down as the rule of guidance in the foreign administration of this country. Where are the principles of the Tory party ? I have read through these speeches, and I have scarcely found a single principle which they have advocated. One or two principles I may mention presently ; but the great point that they have dealt with has been the condemnation of the Government for their blunders. Gentlemen, I do not believe in the infallibility of any Government. I think it would be a great misfortune if the country supposed any Government were infallible. I do not ; and, while I have given a very general support to Mr. Gladstone's

Government, I have not hesitated to criticise the Government, and I have not hesitated in some cases to oppose the Government. I should not oppose them to death, understand. I do not hesitate to say that I think the present Government so good a Government, and so much better than a Tory Government, that if it came to a point, to a "squeak" between them and the Tories, I would give up a good deal of my own opinions in order to support them. But I say I have not hesitated to criticise them and to speak in the House of Commons in opposition to some of their proposals. But let us be fair, gentlemen. What have been the difficulties of the present Government? The difficulties have arisen mainly from their predecessors. In Holy Writ it is said the righteous "do rest from their labours and their works do follow them." That remark is equally true of the evil workers; they may rest from their labours—Disraeli's Government may depart—but their works do follow them. Lord Beaconsfield's Government sowed the seeds of evil in all parts of the world. Wherever the foot of their foreign policy was planted, a upas tree sprang up, spreading danger and devastation around; and it became the duty of the present Government to uproot its noxious growth. They did it in India—wisely and thoroughly, to the great blessing of India—when we withdrew from Candahar and Afghanistan. They could not have done so or they would have done it in other parts of the world where the Tory policy bore such frightful results. I wish they could have done it in the Transvaal. I wish that when they came into office they would have at once withdrawn Sir Bartle Frere and disannexed the Transvaal. I wish they had uprooted the Tory policy at once in Zululand and Egypt. But, gentlemen, they have tried at all events to minimise the results of that mischievous policy. They found difficulties—and I am not prepared to say that those difficulties were not insuperable—but they found difficulties in various ways in the way of reversing entirely the policy of their predecessors. I suppose they thought those difficulties were too great to be overcome, and I am not prepared to blame them. All I say is that I wish they had been overcome. But they have sought to minimise the evil results of the Tory Government, and they are struggling at the present moment in meeting these evil results. There are difficulties in all these parts of the world, and there are difficulties that are embarrassing her Majesty's Government at the present time. I said that in looking over the Tory speakers I had only found one or two evidences of principle, and I will tell you one of the principles. Lord Salisbury, the other day, made a charge against the Government that they were attacking the rights of property, and now comes the principle. He says: "Property is an especial object of care to the Conservative party, and the defence must be carried through where the attack is strongest. Lord Northbrook was very much scandalised in a speech he delivered some days ago, because the recent legislation with respect to Ireland was characterised by my friend, Mr. James Lowther, as robbery. Well, I am afraid Lord Northbrook must accustom himself to that emotion, because I think that the description of it is likely to be very frequently repeated." Then he justifies his charge against the Government of robbery and confiscation of the Irish landowners, by quoting

a nobleman whom he speaks of as a good and consistent Whig, but who I may say appears to me to be a rather consistent Tory—I mean Lord Grey. This nobleman says that the present Government, by their Irish Land Bill, had confiscated a large amount of property belonging to the Irish landowners. Belonging to the Irish landowners! Ah, gentlemen, the so-called rights of property are often the wrongs of poverty. I am in favour of the rights of property: but I am in favour of the rights of property equally of the rich and of the poor. And if a man by his own industry has earned his twenty pounds, I would guard that twenty pounds with all the force of law as much as I would the two or three hundred thousand pounds of the rich man. Rights of property and the Irish landowners! Why, gentlemen, when the Devon Commission was appointed by the Government of the day fifty years ago—Lord Devon being at the head, and the members of which were men of high distinction—they reported that owing to the tenure of land in Ireland, the Irish landowners were constantly raising the rents of the tenants upon the improvements that they made themselves. There were thousands of Irish tenants who had squatted, it may be upon some hill-side, or upon some moss-bed. On the hill-side they had gathered the stones that prevented the fruitfulness of the land, on the moss they had taken out the turf and drained the land—they had done it by their own labours—and land on the hill-side, and on the moss that was not worth more than a shilling an acre, if it was worth that, became gradually worth more and more. The land agent then stepped in and placed a rent upon the hard labour of the occupier of the soil—perhaps 5s. or 10s. an acre upon the improvements that this man had made by his own labour, and then the tenant, who had perhaps been labouring with some stalwart sons in making the improvements, died, and left the heritage of labour to his sons, who went on until again the land agent stepped in and possibly raised the rent to 10s., 15s., or 20s. an acre. Then it might be that owing to bad harvests, the tenant, who had raised the value of the land from a shilling an acre to 15s. or 20s., might be unable to meet his payment for rent. Then he was evicted and his family and children were thrown upon the wayside—they were sent to the Workhouse or abroad. I am as much opposed to the violence of the Irish as any one. It is a wickedness and a crime, and I am prepared to support the Government in putting it down. But I say that this was robbery—gross unmitigated robbery—on the part of the owners of land. Gentlemen, it was not only in extreme cases of that kind, but in hundreds of cases. Men built their homesteads, their own farms, the building in which they herded their cattle; they spent their labour and their money, and the landowner came in and charged the rent upon these buildings which the men had raised; and so it was all over Ireland. The Irish landowners, unlike the English landowners, did nothing to improve the value of the holdings, but from year to year took care to charge a higher rent upon the property, because of the improvements of the tenants. And, therefore, they confiscated from year to year the property of the tenants. It is difficult to estimate how much that has come to during the last twenty years. I do not know, it may be two millions a year, it may be three

millions a year. The Land Commission, which has been appointed, has reduced the rents from $22\frac{1}{2}$ to 25 per cent., in some cases very much more, in some cases very much less, and I do not believe that even with that great reduction they have come to the full amount that might fairly have been required. At the same time, no doubt it is a great boon to the Irish tenants, but it may be that the tenants of Ireland for the last fifty years have been paying from perhaps two millions to three millions a year more rent than they ought to have done. Take two millions a year. Do you think that if the tenants of Ireland have paid during the last fifty years, in rent, one hundred million pounds more than they ought to do, what that means in a destitute country like Ireland? Ah! well may Lord Salisbury talk about confiscation of property. I say what we ought to have done, if we could have done it, was to have made the landowners of Ireland refund this property that they have confiscated. Notwithstanding the abuse of Lord Salisbury, this act of the Government was an Act, not of confiscation, but of justice, and I am glad to say that it has begun to tell. Gentlemen, I have far greater belief in the effect of ameliorating laws, than I have in the effect of repressive measures. I believe that if we can make the Irish tenants comfortable and prosperous, that is the secret of the better condition of Ireland. I have no doubt in my own mind that if fifty years ago this Land Act of Mr. Gladstone's had been passed, we should have had no difficulty now. We should have had a tenantry—a prosperous Irish tenantry. All this money that has been taken out of the pockets of Irish landowners would have been in the pockets of the tenants, fructifying, and by having fixity of tenure and certainty of occupation, they would have done a vast deal more for the enrichment of the soil than they could under the precarious tenure of late years. Gentlemen, I am glad to tell you that these measures are having a very marked effect. I observe that my friend, Mr. Trevelyan, in a speech he made the other day, said that “in October, 1881, the agrarian crimes, other than threatening letters, reached a total of 246. Last October they were 34. In November, 1881, there were 257 such crimes; last November there were only 24.” Gentlemen, that shows a very great improvement in regard to the cases of crime in Ireland. But I have also the pleasure to state, on the authority of Mr. Trevelyan, that the tenants are getting more and more contented in their holdings; rent is being paid very generally, and the landowners and tenants are acting together in a much better spirit, and, in fact, in some cases landlords are allowing their tenants to purchase their farms on reasonable terms. I hope that we are at the beginning of a new era in the development of the industry and prosperity of our sister country. The Tories assert that our policy is a danger to property. I maintain that the Tory policy is a great danger to property. I say the Tories have always supported measures which are a danger to property. It appears to me that the greatest possible danger to property arises from a monopoly of land; from restrictions upon trade, and from impediments to the free importation of food. The Tories were always in favour of restrictions upon trade, and impediments to the importation of food, and now they are in favour of laws which tend to tie up land and to encourage the agglomeration of land in large estates throughout the country. Gentlemen, that

is altogether in the interests of a false policy. The great protection of property is to make it easy for people to become possessors of it. I have heard it said that the existence of large numbers of peasant proprietors acts as a lightning conductor, and protects the large estates from the attacks of communism and of disturbance; and so it is. If you get a people amongst whom property is distributed widely, who have an opening for their industry, and an opportunity for improving their condition, you get a people who are necessarily opposed to any disturbance in the rights of property. Now, gentlemen, I consider the present state of the land is a danger to property. I won't dwell upon it to-night; I have not time, though I have wished for some years past to say something to you upon the land question. But it does appear to me that the present state of the distribution of land is a most dangerous state in the interest of property. The whole of our laws are arranged with a view to enable the owners to tie up land, to prevent its being distributed amongst the various people in the country who would be disposed to possess land, and the result is that the great estates—three-fourths of the country—are really possessed by a comparatively few owners. I trust that under a better system there will be an opportunity for gradual distribution of land, not by taking anybody's property from him, but by giving to the laws such a character as will secure those influences which will naturally lead to such a distribution, instead of laws, that by primogeniture and entail, tend to tie up the property in the hands of a comparative few. And I say the Liberal party are the men to protect property by improving the condition of the working classes. Let me here say that I know it was said against us that since the Liberal party had been in power trade has not been so good as people expected it to be. I am sorry that I myself, in the iron and coal trade, and you in the cotton trade, suffer from a variety of causes which are entirely independent of the position of the ministry in power. No doubt from time to time the trade of this country will continue to suffer fluctuations; but I want every gentleman in this room, and every elector of Burnley who may read what I am about to say, to remember that the difference in the condition of the manufacturing population of Burnley and in all parts of the country, and that which existed fifty years ago, is so great that it is almost incredible, and it is by reason of Liberal legislation, by reason of the policy of the Liberals. Gentlemen, just let me remind you what is the fact even now when we are under circumstances of commercial depression. Let me remind you that in 1840 the entire imports of food and of all kinds of beef, bacon, wheat, flour, tea, sugar, and everything else, amounted to 27½ millions sterling, while in 1882 (only 42 years after) they amounted to 158½ millions sterling, an increase of 131 million pounds in value, mark you. What becomes of that food, do you think? It is not thrown away, but eaten; and eaten by whom? The upper ten thousand eat comparatively little of it. It is done by the great mass of the toiling multitudes in this country, whose condition is infinitely better than it was when first I commenced life fifty years ago. Why, the imports of this country—that is to say, the value of all kinds of raw material and goods of every description in 1840, were 62 millions, or £2 7s. 6d. per head of the population

at that time. In 1882 the imports amounted to 413 millions, or £11 14s. 8d. per head of the population. Let us take the exports of British produce. In 1840 they were £51,308,000, or an average of £1 18s. 9d. per head, man, woman, and child in this country. In 1882 there were £241,469,000, or an average of £6 16s. 10d. per head of the population. Now, gentlemen, just you reckon what that means, and the difference in the earnings of 1840 and the earnings of 1882, for that is practically what it means, because you will bear in mind that all this great export of British manufactures required a considerable amount of labour to produce. Supposing these fair-traders, or these anti-free-traders were to drive us back 40 years, what would become of us? Do you think you would be able to live? You would not be able to find food; you would not have employment. There would be a vast mass of discontented starving population, shut out from the industry of the world, and where would property be then? These defenders of property are those who strike at the foundation of property by seeking a policy which destroys the prosperity of this country. I had intended, but I will not dwell upon a most admirable paper which was delivered the other day by my friend Mr. Giffen, of the Board of Trade, who pointed out that the condition of the working classes of this country during the last 50 years had enormously improved; and he showed it by statistics, by the great increase of wages amounting during the last 50 years to from 33 to 85 per cent. He showed it by the enormous strides which had been taken in the education of the people; in fact it is almost incredible what we have done, and what we are doing at present. He showed that crime had diminished, that pauperism had diminished rapidly, that savings' bank deposits had increased to a very large extent, and he mentioned that the number of members of Industrial and Provident Co-operative Societies in England and Wales had increased from 90,000 in 1862 to 525,000 in 1881; the share capital from £428,000 to £5,881,000; the loan capital from £428,000 to £1,267,000; the sales from £2,333,000 to £20,901,000; and the net profits from £165,000 to £1,617,000 a year. That represents a vast amount of property, not held by these noble Lords and distinguished gentlemen, who count their acres by the thousand; but all this property is held to the greatest extent by the hard-working men of England, who themselves are men of property, and that is the great protection of property, to make people enjoy the advantages of property. The great danger to property is when there are monopolies or privileges by which the owners of property surround themselves to the injury and detriment of the other parts of the population of this country.

I have only a few more words to say, and it is because I again intend to leave my friend to have his say about the County Franchise. However, I cannot help alluding to it, lest you should suppose that I did not feel strongly in my own mind about it, and I feel more compelled, in fact, to allude to it because I wish to reply to two or three remarks that Lord Hartington made before the meetings at Manchester and Accrington, for he wished to get the opinion from the country as to certain points. One was as to whether the franchise in the boroughs and the counties should be absolutely the same in every respect. Gentlemen, I

am altogether in favour of that. I am in favour of making it absolutely the same, so that there should be no difference between a man living in Burnley and a man living outside the borough, who happens to be similarly circumstanced. Then Lord Hartington asked an opinion as to whether there should be a repeal of the 40s. freehold. I do not think that is a matter of very great consequence. When everybody who is a householder has a vote it will be of much less consequence. But my opinion is this: I would not disfranchise anybody who was resident, I would leave 40s. freeholders with this condition, that they must be resident in the county where they vote, or within seven miles of the borough where they vote. That is to say, that there should be no faggot votes made by people living at great distances. Then there is the question of the Irish Franchise. That is a most difficult question, and the Irish members must really blame themselves for having made it very difficult. It is most difficult for those of us who have always shown our desire to do justice to Ireland; it is most difficult for us to prevent a very strong amount of animosity being excited by the course which those gentlemen take; and, unfortunately, by many events which have taken place in the sister country. No doubt the feeling in England is that the Irish members have been so much a disturbing element in the House of Commons that it is not desirable to increase them. Well, that may be, but the point is this: if you are going to give a franchise to the English people, can you, with justice, say to the Irish people, "you shall not have the franchise." I am disposed to say that you have only one of two courses to take. It is not as though it was a question whether you would have the representatives of the Irish nation in the House or not; you have them now, and you will have, even under the present franchise, a much larger number at the general election. But the question is, will you have any representatives of Ireland at all? Now, that is one alternative. Well, nobody proposes to disfranchise Ireland, and to govern Ireland as a Crown Colony. Then if you are not prepared to do that, you must give them fair representation. You must say to them, whatever suffrage we give our English people you shall have; but, while we give you no just excuse for saying that you are dealt with unjustly, we shall claim that you shall obey the law. My belief is that it would be only a source of very great irritation, and I think it would be a source of great discontent, if we were to limit the franchise in Ireland in the way that we do not limit it in England. Therefore, I am prepared to say that I think it is better to commence straight; that the franchise be equal in the two countries. I believe that, at all events, it will take away one cry of unjust treatment; and I hope that it will tend, along with other things, gradually to remove from the minds of the Irish people that feeling of animosity which is so unfortunate in regard to this country; and I hope it will also tend to show the Irish people that while the Liberals of this country are quite prepared to give them every justice, they will be no party to any measure the effect of which will be to separate the Government of Ireland, in an Imperial manner, from the Government of this country. I have only one more word to say about the County Franchise, and it is this: I think it ought to be the first measure the Government take in hand; I do not believe it is safe to

leave the measure any longer. Next Session is the fourth Session of Parliament, and I think that the country has a right to expect that the Government will deal seriously with this great question in the coming Session. There will be a struggle in the House of Commons, but there will be a considerable minority against us. We shall probably pass the Bill in the Commons. It will then go to the Lords, and we have been told by Lord Salisbury and others—it has been well understood—that the Lords will kick it out. Gentlemen, I think it is not unlikely that upon that issue there will be a dissolution, and that you will be called upon to express your opinions at the ballot box on two issues. One will be upon this great measure of enfranchisement of your neighbours outside the borough boundary, and the other will be, how far it is right that we should have a second Chamber, in no sense representative of the people. It seems to me, that while there may be very strong and potent arguments in favour of having a second Chamber properly constituted and representing public opinion, to deal with the measures passed through the first Chamber, it is utterly without justification that in that second Chamber men should have a right to sit without any reference to their individual qualifications, men who may be next door to idiots, men very often not of high moral or mental character, men, whom the great body of the people would not trust as the arbiters of their interests. I say it will be a question for the people of this country to consider whether it is desirable that a second Chamber, consisting to a great extent of the incompetent successors of incompetent squires, should continue to have this power. Whenever that question arises, I trust it will be dealt with in a reasonable and moderate manner. But, gentlemen, we shall have a struggle. It will be, I dare say, a hard struggle, but there is no doubt as to the result. We have passed through such struggles before; we have had narrow majorities; we have had contested elections; we have had occasional defeats; we have had changes of Government. But in the end there has only been one result, and that has been victory. I am ready, as I trust you are ready, for the great fight in prospect, and I believe that as the result of the fight we shall make another great step in the progress of human rights, and in the recognition of the liberties of the British people.

No. XI.

Annual Address to his Constituents, delivered at the Mechanics' Institution, Burnley, Feb. 2, 1885.

Mr. Mayor, ladies and gentlemen : The last occasion upon which I had the pleasure of addressing my Burnley constituents was in August, at a time of great public excitement, and I recollect that on that occasion thousands of intelligent and earnest Liberals in Burnley and from the adjoining districts marched in procession, and joined together in a great open-air meeting, in which they passed resolutions in favour of the extension of the Franchise to the county householders. That

meeting was most satisfactory and agreeable evidence of the strong interest that my Burnley friends felt in that great reform, and at the time of that meeting hundreds of other meetings were being held in all parts of the three kingdoms, or rather in England and Scotland; these great meetings, in every case, showing the most unbounded earnestness and enthusiasm in favour of the great measure of reform. Gentlemen, the Tories thought they could do something to neutralise this great evidence of public opinion, and they set up opposition meetings, and they had Tory picnics; but there was a great distinction between our meetings and theirs. Our meetings were for the most part open-air meetings held in public places, and to which everybody was invited, and which everybody could attend. We had eight times as many meetings as the Tories had. The Tory meetings were held in the parks of noblemen and gentlemen, and the announcements as they appeared upon the walls looked like play bills, they were so full of entertainment. There was music, there were refreshments, there were games, and there were all sorts of inducements; but there was this difference between these entertainments and other amusements, that in many cases, not only had the people nothing to pay for going there, but they were assisted in their railway fares, and they had refreshments at fixed charges. Gentlemen, notwithstanding all that, they could get up no such demonstration as we had, and the Tories themselves, whatever they pretended, were no doubt convinced that the public opinion of the country was in favour of the Franchise. But they were convinced of something else. As these meetings went on there were more and more expressions of public opinion, especially in regard to the House of Lords. It was quite clear that the people of this country were beginning to consider whether it was right, or in any way justifiable that the will and the decision of the representatives of the people should be controlled by a House of Peers, many of whom were utterly unfitted for any legislative action or authority, and had assumed it not by virtue of any representative right, but simply because they were, accidentally, the eldest sons of peers of the realm. Well, gentlemen, the feeling went higher and higher, and the Lords soon found that if it went on it might mean mischief, and therefore they remembered that discretion was the better part of valour—and also that old couplet which says—

*He that flights and runs away,
May live to fight another day.*

So the Lords were knocked under, and were willing to enter into an arrangement which would relieve the difficulty of their position. Now, I daresay, gentlemen, a number of you, more earnest than others, would have liked the Lords to have fought this matter out to the bitter end, and no doubt, if they had fought it out—if they had fought to the bitter end—if they had rejected the Franchise Bill the second time—there would have been such an outburst of popular feeling that I have no doubt that the Lords would have either been ended or mended. I am bound to say, not being so young as some of you, that I am glad the Lords did yield. I think that whenever a reform of the House of Lords does take place it will be better that it should take place in a period of comparative

political calm, rather than as the result of political excitement ; and let it be borne in mind that the fact that the House of Lords did yield is evidence of the fact that they are gradually declining in power, and when we get a new Parliament elected on a wide and extended suffrage and with a redistribution of the important character contemplated, we shall have a Parliament that will have such popular power at its back that I take it for granted that no House of Lords will venture to oppose the decided will of such a house of representatives of the people. In fact, the House of Lords are now going step by step towards a position of impotency, and unless they themselves, which is not improbable, are willing that there should be such a reform of the second chamber as will give them authority arising from a representative position, I don't hesitate to say that the power and influence of the House of Lords, in future legislation, will fall into a position of very little consequence or importance. Now, gentlemen, I have said that a great compromise took place, and I should like to say that I entirely approved of that compromise. I consider that Mr. Gladstone, in that compromise, by his wonderful skill, judgment, and uprightness, by his great political experience, by his political wisdom, was enabled to gain a great victory without sacrificing one iota of principle. I know that our Tory friends are in the habit of saying that the Government knocked under. I can testify as to what the Government did from having heard members of the Government during the controversy. The Government said to the Conservative party, " You are charging us with having some desire to ' jerrymander ' the constituencies, and to redistribute political power in an unfair sense. We are willing to show our hands to you ; we are willing to let you know our plans, provided that it is distinctly understood that we will not make the passing of the Franchise Bill dependent upon the passing of the Redistribution Bill." That was the principle. I heard Lord Hartington make an offer very much in these terms, at Rawtenstall, in a very important speech which he made at that place. I heard Mr. Gladstone, in the House of Commons, distinctly make the offer, and I heard how it was received by an elderly young gentleman, Lord John Manners. He said it reminded him of the spider and the fly—" will you not enter into my parlour ?" said the spider to the fly." Lord John Manners would take good care they did not. The good sense of the Conservative party led them into the arrangement, and they agreed that they would consider the same in regard to the Redistribution Bill, on the understanding that if there was a practical agreement between the Government and the Conservatives on the subject the Franchise Bill would be passed. Now, gentlemen, I am bound to say that I think the action Lord Salisbury and Sir Stafford Northcote took in that arrangement was in the highest degree creditable to their patriotic feelings. I am not standing here to taunt the Conservatives with any surrender, for I believe that, however much they were disinclined, the great evidence of public opinion which had been shown during the agitation convinced them that it was absolutely necessary that there should be this extension of the franchise, and they came to the conclusion, as statesmen, that, if there was to be this great change, it had better be carried out in a thorough and complete manner ; and they met Mr.

Gladstone, and other members of the Cabinet, with a view to coming to some arrangement—not to defeat the aims of the Franchise Bill, but to make arrangements as complete and as practicable as possible. Well, gentlemen : I say we owe them thanks for saving the country from a sterile and bitter agitation, which would have interfered with a great many interests the country had at heart. As soon as the arrangements were entered into, the Lords passed the Franchise Bill, it being read the third time without a division and without an amendment, and so this great revolution of 1884 was accomplished. That measure was passed, which will certainly raise the year 1884 into a very prominent position in the annals of the history of this country. You will remember, as my friend the Mayor has said, that this measure is no unimportant measure. We give two millions of our fellow citizens—capable citizens—votes. We talk about the great Reform Act of 1832, but the enfranchisement of the measure that has been passed this year is four times as great as that which was contemplated by that of 1832 ; and the enfranchisement of the present measure is twice as much as that which was secured by the measure of 1867, introduced by Mr. Disraeli, but very much enlarged by Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Bright. Of course we know, whatever the Tories might suspect, that the Liberals were always anxious that with the enfranchisement of this large number of voters there should be a great redistribution of political power. Why, this has been one of the planks in our platform for years past. We have always said—“What is the use of giving votes if you are to have a great number of little boroughs with a large number of members, and large towns or boroughs with few members ?” We said that when we have suffrage we must have redistribution, a great change in the representation of the people ; therefore the Government were most anxious to bring in the Seats Bill, and the Conservatives, fortunately, agreed to the consideration of this Bill before it was introduced to Parliament, and now they are saying they made it a great deal better Bill than it otherwise would have been. Now I am bound to say that I think it is a better Bill than it otherwise would have been. I don’t know, unless the Government had got the consent of the Opposition leaders, that it would have been practicable or wise to have brought in a Bill of such a character, for you must have regard to the difficulties of carrying a Redistribution Bill, inasmuch as men, whose seats may be lost, may very well feel rather inclined to put a spoke into the wheels of the Government to stop that which they dislike so much. But when they got the support of the Conservatives they (the Government) could carry out their inclinations, which were to make the Bill as wide, as important, and as complete as they possibly could. But, gentlemen, what strikes me as the most marvellous thing is that the Tories should have agreed to such a wide redistribution. It shows a wonderful march of public opinion. I should like to know what the fathers and grandfathers of the present Conservatives would have said to such a Redistribution Bill as this the Government have brought forward. I can recollect the time when the Tories used to say that they stood upon the rock of the constitution, and they said that the sea might beat against that rock, and other elements.

in nature, still they would stand by it. By that rock they meant rotten boroughs—the boroughs of 1831. They meant that if the rotten boroughs were disfranchised and destroyed, the sun of England would set and the whole of the interests of the country would be deteriorated. They submitted, probably, to that because they could not help it, and now the descendants of the Tories of 1831 and 1832 are willing to accept a measure far beyond the wildest conceptions of some Radicals of those days. With regard to that small measure which was introduced by Mr. Disraeli in 1867, I recollect that he said that he had educated his party. I think we may say now that Mr. Gladstone has educated the Tory party rather more. The pedagogue Disraeli, teaching the school of Tory politicians, managed to bring the Tories up to the second or third standard, but Mr. Gladstone has advanced them to the fifth or sixth standard. I am very glad of it, but just consider for a moment what this great bill, for it is a great bill, will do. The Redistribution Bill abolishes upwards of a hundred members of small borough constituencies; it takes one member from thirty-seven boroughs, and it gives a large number of members to the great towns. I will say what it does to eight large cities of the country. London at present has 22 members, under the new bill it has to have 59 members. Birmingham has three members, which have been increased to seven. Glasgow has three, and has been increased to seven; Leeds, three to five; Manchester, three to six; Liverpool, three to nine; Edinburgh, two to four; Sheffield, two to five; so that these eight large cities that under the present representation have only forty-one members, will under the new bill have one hundred and two members. I say that this is a great advance; but there is another blessing in connection with these great constituencies. The minority membership, which was a mockery, a delusion, and a snare, has been done away with. The idea of Manchester, that great city, having three members, two being Liberals, and one, the minority member, a Tory, who would, of course, go into the lobby against the Liberals, and thus put the people of Manchester into the position of having only one member practically. We have got to the root of that, I am glad to say, and in place of it we have single members for the different divisions of the large constituencies, large towns being divided, and each division having one member. The same thing is done with the counties, and populous counties like Lancashire have a large increase of members. I think that the increase of members in Lancashire will be from 8 to 23, and what will these members be? When I think of Lancashire, I think of it as a congeries of large towns, for you can go from one part to another, and seem to travel along roads or streets with houses at each side. You find large urban populations within a few miles of each other, which up to this time have not, practically, been represented in the legislature of this kingdom. You have towns like Padiham, Accrington, Nelson, and Brierfield, you have all these trading populations of men quite equal to yourselves to form a judgment on political questions, who have had no vote. Now they will have a vote, and though the members may call themselves county members, for a county like Lancashire it would be more true to say that they were members of large urban constituencies. I think we

cannot exaggerate the effect. It will breathe life into the dry bones of county political existence. I trust it will lead to the return, from the counties of this kingdom, of a number of men highly qualified to represent the great body of the people, who hitherto have had no voice. I trust Lancashire will send influential members to Parliament. I shall look to this district to send me good colleagues to the House of Parliament. Perhaps I may be allowed to say, as an elector of this division, that I shall be disappointed if amongst those members returned for Lancashire I don't find my hon. friend Sir Ughtred J. Kay-Shuttleworth. I had the pleasure of meeting with Sir Ughtred in the House of Commons in former years, and I hope that in the next Parliament we may be in the benches on the same side of the House, and taking part in supporting similar great measures. Now this question of single-member constituencies is in accordance with the recommendations of Mr. Cobden, who always advocated that when we gave a larger number of members to large towns, we ought to divide the town into districts, and each district should have a single member, because he said, what was perfectly true, that would lead to a large amount of political life in these districts, and would give a much fairer representation of the opinion of the large town. You know that in large towns one division may have a certain class of opinions more prevalent than they are in another; and if you have half-a-dozen members representing one large town, elected from half-a-dozen divisions, the probability is, that you will have a certain variety of opinions which will represent the larger minorities in the great cities. I look upon it as an admirable feature of the bill, for since the days of Cobden advocating it, I have advocated it, therefore I am delighted at the Government having adopted it. Some people say there will be objections to it. They say if you have single-member constituencies you will have parochial members. That is not complimentary to me, because I have been the single member of a single-member constituency, and if I must confess to you I may say that I much prefer standing on my own hook than to having another fellow on my back. I say look to experience. Have single-member constituencies sent inferior men to the House of Commons? Some of the greatest men in Parliament have been members of single member constituencies. For instance, there was Cobden, and Sir Robert Peel, and there are Gladstone and many others, who have been elected by single-member constituencies. They mean, I daresay, and what they do say is, that men active in Boards of Guardians, Local Boards, and Town Councils will get amongst their fellow townsmen and be returned for Parliament. A very good thing too, if it is the case. Why should it not be so? What these men who cry out want, is that young gentlemen who have taken university degrees or honours, passed difficult examinations in classics or mathematics, and in addition to that have the great advantage of being connected with distinguished leading families of the country, that these should be sent into Parliament as representatives of some large constituencies or counties under the wing of one or two other men. I don't wish to decry the education which these young gentlemen have had the advantages of receiving. I don't wish to depreciate it, but I

don't hesitate to say that, if I had to choose between a Parliament consisting of men who had the training of local administrative affairs and a Parliament consisting of gentlemen fresh fledged from the universities with the highest honours the examinations could confer upon them, I should prefer the Parliament consisting of men who had experience in local matters, men who have served an apprenticeship in public life as the servants of their fellow-townsmen. I am in favour of supporting local public spirit. We want to create it rather than neutralise it. I would be the last man in the world to suppress representation, even if it gave the greater honour to those who have borne the heat and burden of the day in managing the affairs of their towns. I had intended to say something about proportional representation; but I submit that single-member constituencies will give ample representation to minorities. I won't dwell upon the question of proportional representation, because I have not a blackboard. I could teach you what it is, what it would do, and what it might do, but it would take a long time to drive it into your brains. I believe it would be amusing to you. It would be something like a conjuror with a pack of cards; he shuffles, re-shuffles, and then shows that there is nothing unfair; he cuts them two or three times in the middle, and then lays them into heaps; next he cuts each of the heaps, divides some of them and sub-divides others until he gets the result of the trick, and so-and-so has the majority. But, you say, that is not right, and if he is not clever enough somebody else will get the majority in the next shuffle. I am convinced that it will never do. Englishmen want a fair stand-up fight. The advocates of proportional representation say that in 1874 a House of Parliament was returned consisting of a majority of Tories, although a majority of Liberals voted at the polls. That may be so; but what was the fact in those days? I will tell you. In those days, as now, inasmuch as the Redistribution Bill has not come into operation, there were 120 boroughs with 157,000 electors that returned 144 members, while 19 large boroughs with 773,000 electors only returned 43 members. That is only part of the case, but don't you see that under this Redistribution Bill single members, for the most part, will represent 50,000 or 60,000 inhabitants, so that the case will be entirely different, and you may rely upon it that under the Redistribution Bill the majority returned to the House of Commons will fairly represent the majority of opinion in the country. It may be possible to carry this Bill further, and I should not have been sorry if all the towns of 20,000, instead of 15,000, had been thrown into the counties. I should also have been glad if a second man had been taken off some of the boroughs that have 60,000 of a population. But it is a grand step, and I am not prepared to complain of it in any way whatever. I say let us be thankful; but I don't say let us rest and be thankful. This measure is probably a step to a further measure which will be a still greater advance to the policy of having one man to tolerably equal divisions of the constituencies of the kingdom. I daresay you all read the magnificent speech of Mr. Bright, at Birmingham. He said: "We have thrown open the portals of the Temple of Freedom, and we have invited, not a class, but the nation itself to enter." That was an eloquent idea. But Mr. Bright sounded a note of warning, and he reminded us

that nations have ere now entered into the portals of Temples of Freedom and have defiled these temples with ignorant, narrow-minded legislation, with evil passions, and with wars of aggression. If our nation, now entering into the Temple of Freedom, is to fulfil the functions of its new position, it must be guided by moral truths, by high principles, and by political enlightenment. We, as the Liberal party, rest upon political enlightenment and upon the fact that people in this country wish to understand and take an interest in political questions. I have observed a curious remark that was made by Sir Stafford Northcote in North Devon the other day. He was speaking of their experiences in certain parts, and he said, "We find that when we get to speak more to the working men, the more Conservative their inclinations really are, and we find also how very ignorant they are on the different questions which ought to be brought before them." Of course, he has got into a particular groove. He has gone among a lot of ignorant people, and has found that they were Tories. I recollect the time when it was said that ignorance was the mother of devotion. It may be much more truly said now that ignorance will be the mother of Toryism, and our only chance is to enlighten the people, get them to understand political questions, and, having got them to understand these questions, to lead them to join in reasonable and wise measures of progress. Of course there will be a number of questions pressed upon the attention of the new Parliament, but perhaps the most urgent question of all is the land question. I don't believe that it is possible to postpone it much longer, because the circumstances surrounding agriculture are so acute. Owing to bad harvests, and owing to the competition of foreign countries, there can be no doubt whatever that the position of agriculture is now one of great difficulty. We know that farmers are being ruined, that rents are falling, that rents are not being paid in some cases, that land is badly cultivated, that labourers are suffering, and that everybody is crying out for a remedy. What shall it be? It will be for the new Parliament to discuss that question, and there will no doubt be quack remedies suggested. The landlords will propose to relieve farmers from local burdens amounting to a shilling per acre, which would, in fact, be no permanent advantage. The local burdens we have taken off the farmers and added to the taxation of the country have been little or no relief to them. In some cases the rent has afterwards been increased; in every case the farmer has had to pay a higher income tax. If you take off local burdens you don't get rid of them; you put them on taxation, and somebody must pay the taxes: the farmers have to pay. This relieving of the farmers of local burdens is a red herring that is being drawn across their path to divert their attention from matters which are of far greater importance to them. Then there is talk about putting import duties upon food. I should like to see anybody attempt it. I don't care whether they call it Fair Trade, or what they call it. If they attempt to go back to the old days of protection, and put even a shilling per quarter on wheat, and interfere with beef and mutton, you will soon tell them that you will not stand it. Then there is another idea people are talking about, namely

—the nationalisation of land. What do they mean? Do they mean that the Government, who are the worst manufacturers in the world, are to try their hand at farming? Do they mean that the Government are to buy land and distribute it among a number of favoured people who may have the chance of working it? It is altogether a delusion and a snare. They talk about the land being the property of the people, and of the natural right of the people to land. There is a sense in which the people are co-partners with the landowners in the land. I will tell you in what sense. It is in a practical sense, and you must bear in mind I quote from two very eminent writers. One is Taylor Coleridge, who said that “landed property was a trust, rather than property, held for great objects connected with the cultivation of the land and other social objects, and to be diverted to the particular purposes of the owner only after those objects had been completely fulfilled.” Judge Longfield says of the land that it “is the gift of the Creator of the world to mankind, and the foundation of the right of property in land is in order that it may be cultivated to the most advantage.” That is, we have the right to say that we claim that the land laws of this country shall be such that the land of which the owners are the trustees, and in which we have a great interest, shall be cultivated to the best advantage. Now, is it cultivated to the best advantage? I say it is not, and in consequence of its not being so, the whole country suffers, from year to year, enormous disadvantage and injury. Then, gentlemen, I have before me the opinions of men connected with agriculture, whose authority nobody can question. One is Lord Derby, who thinks that with proper cultivation the produce of the land can be doubled. Lord Leicester, a still higher authority, says the produce might be nearly doubled under a more perfect system of agriculture. Then there is a still higher authority—Mr. J. B. Lawes, and he has said that he has no doubt whatever that if the land was properly cultivated we could produce as much meat, and as much wheat, corn, etc., as we at present import from foreign countries. He says distinctly that we could produce as much as is required to support the population. Consider what that means. Why, our own produce at present is about £260,000,000, and we import various kinds of food amounting to £125,000,000; and these authorities say that we can provide as much out of the soil of this country as would prevent the necessity of our importing these £125,000,000 of produce. I leave the matter to them, for I am not an authority. All I can say is that when I hear so much complaint about agriculture, I am astonished to find that last year we imported £10,000,000 worth of bacon. Now we should have grown a few more pigs at home. We imported £12,000,000 worth of butter; we ought to produce a great deal more butter in this country than we do. £5,000,000 worth of cheese was imported; we ought to make a deal more cheese than we do. We imported nearly £3,000,000 worth of eggs. With proper management, a very large quantity of the produce I have named might have been produced at home. Why is it not so? I cannot go into the matter fully, I have not time; but, gentlemen, I should like to state to you that the difficulties

are twofold. One has reference to the way in which the land is held, and the other is the feudal conditions under which the tenant has it. The land laws of this country have been so framed as to give every facility to the tying up of great properties, and the agglomeration of large estates, and the result is that the large landed class is limited. I will repeat the facts which you will have had before, which are that 10,207 persons own two-thirds of England and Wales; 330 persons own two-thirds of the whole of Scotland; and 1942 persons own two-thirds of the whole of Ireland. Now I say that these great properties are positively an enormous public disadvantage and a public danger. The owners of many of these properties have neither the power nor the inclination to develop the land they possess, and I find that no less than three-fourths of these great properties in England is tied up and in strict settlement; that is to say, the nominal owner has only a life interest. Put yourselves in the position of the owner of the property, and consider if you would put anything into the land when, at your death, it would go to somebody—some distant relation you had no power over. You would receive as much as you could out of the land. As a matter of course, you are not going to lay out money on property of that kind. Suppose you have a family of sons. This property, being fastened by entail, must go to the eldest son. You say, if I lay out anything here it will go to my eldest son, to the disadvantage of the other children; so you will not spend anything on the property. That is the case with many of these large proprietors. Some of them are in debt, mortgaged up to the hilt, and some of the great noblemen are hard tasked to get through from one year to another. They have mortgaged to pay the charges upon the estates, and simply live to get as much out of it as possible. Then some great noblemen become bankrupt. There is the Duke of Newcastle, for instance. What ought to happen in the case of a spendthrift like this? Just what happens with shopkeepers—to meet his debts the property should be taken over by his creditors and sold to anyone who will buy it. But it is not so with these great estates. These great estates of the Duke of Newcastle are only a life interest, therefore the creditors can only take what the life interest is worth. When he dies his estate goes to his eldest son. I am altogether against laws compelling the breaking up of property. What I say is, don't have a single law which facilitates the tying up of property. Let us have absolute ownership, no settlements. If a man is in debt, let his land go to pay others, and you may rely upon it, it will soon be found, by degrees, that these great properties would be broken up, and we would have a larger number of owners of property. Then we ought to have a system under which land could be easily registered, so that it might be bought or sold without much difficulty and expense. I would do everything in my power to encourage the ownership of land by the cultivators of the land, and I can tell you where I think we may at once do a great deal to facilitate it. There is one-sixth of the land of this country held in mortmain. I would be glad to see a law under which the whole of that property should be sold, and that the farmers occupying it as tenants should have a right of pre-emption, at a settled price, on the purchase. I go further, and say any land mortgaged beyond a certain amount should

be sold, and that then, again, these fully mortgaged, encumbered estates, which cannot be used by the owner in a manner which is necessary for the purposes of the joint interest in the production of food by the application of capital, that they in the same way be sold, and that the farmers should have the pre-emption of purchase; and I would by means of the State render assistance to the farmers by loans upon the security of the land to enable them to become the purchasers of these estates. Although it may be very desirable that farmers should own the land, it is by no means absolutely necessary for the production of the full product. What they require is absolute security for their capital, and perfect freedom in the cultivation of the soil. It is impossible for farmers to compete successfully with the world, unless they have sufficient capital in the soil, unless they have absolute security, and unless they are free from those fetters in which they are now bound to the soil. Let us take this into our minds, that the manufacture of corn and beef must be carried on, if to be successful, with as much enterprise, and under very much the same conditions, as the manufacture of cotton and of iron. I believe that a hundred millions of money may be employed in the cultivation of the soil beyond what is now employed. It may be employed to enormous advantage in the production of food. Why is it not employed? If I contemplated giving a son £20,000 to put into land as a tenant farmer, under present conditions, I should only be fitted to be put into a lunatic asylum. You cannot do it, there is no security. Supposing this hundred millions went into the land. Supposing an increased production of the soil was effected. Think of the enormous benefit to all classes, stimulus to home trade, enormous employment of labour, and rise in wages, in addition to the greater supply of home produce which would be brought about. I believe it is practicable, but not by wild legislation. What we have to say is, that this great property, which is in a sense held in trust, shall be held so as to produce the most advantage of the country. The reform of the land laws will be great and valuable; but, gentlemen, let us not spoil our case by exaggeration. I noticed that one of the speakers at the Conference of Industrial Remuneration said that the land system, and the conduct of some of the landowners, were wholly responsible for the poverty of the country; and one distinguished friend of mine, Mr. Chamberlain, speaking at Birmingham, did not go to that extent, but he said something which implied that the number of paupers we have in this country, which are nearly a million, and a million just above the verge of pauperism, were the offshoots of the land system. I believe the land system has a great deal to do with pauperism; and I believe if we had a better land system, we should give better openings for labour and industry, and we should do a great deal to relieve families that may now verge into paupers. But, gentlemen, let us not deceive ourselves. There is a much greater cause for pauperism than the land system, and which I believe tends materially to interfere with the progress and the advantages of the main body of the people. When we remember that the people of this country, many of them amongst the poorest of the poor, spend in the aggregate at least £120,000,000 a year in drink, I say it is impossible to shut our eyes against the fact that,

apart from the land system and other bad laws, that there is an influence amongst us which is gradually dragging down to the workhouse, and into that class of society which is just above pauperism, a very large number of our fellow-countrymen. Gentlemen, there is not one of us who has ever had the opportunity of observing the people in our workhouses, or who has taken observations upon the career of his associates, and has seen them, perhaps in the enjoyment of health and vigour, constantly spending large sums of money in excess, but has watched them as they have gone, falling and falling, first attacked by disease, which stopped the power of the muscles and the opportunities of winning their bread, then gradually drifting lower and lower, till you, perhaps, see the man you once knew as a vigorous and hard-working individual, clothed in the garb of a pauper. I have seen hundreds in my experience. It is not a matter of one man's experience—it is a fact absolutely determined by carefully secured statistics that the large proportion of this suffering and pauperism is, for the most part, occasioned by excessive drinking. Not only do those men go into workhouses and entail a great burden upon the rest of the community; they go also into gaol. Look at the number of cases, according to the newspapers, in which men are carried before magistrates and juries through drink. Go into your prisons and you will find men there whose downfall has been through drink. Go into your lunatic asylums; wherever you go you find this evil. Men are more willing to spend money in drink than provide themselves with the common necessities of life. These are facts that cannot be disguised, and I cannot doubt for a moment that the new Parliament, representing the great body of the people, will, at all events, feel that, along with other questions, this is a question that must be dealt with—not rashly, but wisely, judiciously, and firmly; and in connection with the question we shall have a system of county government which will give a representative body for the administration of the county, something like that which we have for the administration of our boroughs; and I hope there will be increased power which will tend to check some of the evils that at present exist, because let me say that the present licensing laws are altogether inefficient and objectionable. I, as a magistrate, have no power to do what I should like to do. Do you suppose I should continue licensing gin palaces if I had power to stop it? No, gentlemen. I remember a few years ago many houses in Warrington of which certain people got possession, and turned them into glaring gin palaces; they are curses to the locality, and destructive of life. If I had power I would put a stop to these licenses, but I have no power. Let any man go through Liverpool and see there for himself the horrible places, not for refreshments or recreation, but as mere traps in which women, children, old men, and young men fall. I say that any licensing laws admitting of such things as that require reform. I am not one of those who would strike at anybody's interests, and I hope that when the question is considered it will be so with the greatest possible wisdom and judgment. I say the present system, as it exists, is a curse to the country and must be altered, and I hope that the new Parliament will deal with this question in a wise, prudent, and judicious manner, and carry out the principle laid down by

Mr. Gladstone, namely—whilst doing everything in our power by individual effort, to induce the people to reform themselves, and to recognise the fact that laws should be passed that will make it easy to do right and difficult to do wrong. In the first place, I think the new Parliament will have to deal with what has become a scandal in the present Parliament, and the scandal is this—that a member of Parliament who has been duly elected by a large constituency several times over has been refused his seat and prevented from representing the electors who sent him to Parliament. I see my friend Mr. Hopwood has given notice of a bill in which he proposes to substitute affirmations for oaths in all such cases, and I, for one, shall be very happy to support it. I think it is not only in the interests of political rights and justice, but it is in the interests of religion itself that the scandalous proceedings which have taken place in the House of Commons with regard to Mr. Bradlaugh should be put an end to. The new Parliament will have to deal with expenditure and taxation, and I hope it will deal with both with a firm and a bold hand. We are constantly being pressed by the spending servants of the Crown to spend more and more, and I believe that if the new Parliament supports the Government in putting the pruning knife to our overgrown expenditure, we may save some millions a year, and yet have our services sufficiently, in fact equally as efficient as they are at the present time. I think also that we shall have to deal with taxation. Without going to the length of saying that the rich escape and the poor have all to pay, I am bound to say that I think taxation is unfairly levied as between realised property and industry. I think that precarious incomes are unfairly taxed in proportion to permanent incomes; and, although I should be the last man in the world to advocate anything like such a system as a graduating income-tax—which possibly would be open to the most serious objections—I do believe that a precarious income, which is only worth three or four years' purchase, should not be charged at the same figure as a permanent income, which is worth 30 years' purchase. I think that in that respect there might be a very fair change in the present system of taxation. I think also that the indirect taxes, which not only press upon the convenience and comforts of the working classes, but also interfere with the trade of the country—I mean what are called the breakfast-table duties upon tea and other things, should be repealed; and I think, further, with regard to the death duty, that the estates of landowners should pay at least as much as the hard-earned savings of the hard-worked shopkeeper, who, when he leaves his money to his family, has to pay to the State a very much greater amount per cent. than the amount paid for succession to landed estates in this country. That in itself is a gross abuse, which I hope the new Parliament will remedy. The new Parliament will have also to deal with foreign policy. I trust it may deal with it in the high spirit of the golden rule; that it may seek with regard to foreign nations to adopt the principle, as far as possible, of non-intervention; that we may avoid wars of aggression, and that we may, in fact, recognise fully the rights of other nations as equal to those of our own. We have great questions with regard to India and the colonies, all of which are pressing for solution,

and which, no doubt, will materially affect the future of these branches of the English race. These, and many other questions, which I am not able to allude to, will come before our notice. Let me say, in conclusion, that when the new Parliament meets on the new suffrage and with the redistribution of seats, the people, at all events, will be their own masters. No monarchy, no privileged House of Peers, will be able to thwart their views or control their opinions. These new powers that the House of Commons will possess will entail upon that House new responsibilities. Let us hope, at least, that the people of this country, in entering into the portals of the Temple of Freedom, will be worthy of their high vocation, and will so guide their legislative power as to promote the best interests, the happiness, and the prosperity of the teeming millions of the British race.

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